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CONTENTIO VERITATIS

BY SIX OXFORD TUTORS

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ESSAYS
IN
CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY

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PREFACE

THE beginning of the Twentieth Century finds the Church of England face to face with some very urgent problems. Of these the most clamorous, and perhaps the least important, is the controversy which rages round the Ornaments Rubric and kindred topics—the problem which the daily press has dignified by the title of "The Crisis in the Church." Those who take a wider view of the course of religious thought during the past century will not be disposed to treat these disputes about ritual quite so seriously. They will recognise that more pressing than any ritualistic controversy is a problem, or group of problems, which touches not the Anglican Communion only, but every Christian body. The acrimonious dispute between Natural Science and the old Orthodoxy, which agitated the last generation, is happily a thing of the past. No section of the Church that counts for much now denies the facts of geology, and Darwinism is no longer regarded as the foe of Christian faith. A great many of the clergy have accepted the principle of criticism, and are prepared to apply it with some boldness at least to the Old Testament. But many even of those who are quite uncompromising in their acceptance of critical results seem to have an inadequate appreciation of the changes which such an acceptance necessarily

involves, not only in our attitude towards the Bible, but also in the whole tone and temper of theology and religious teaching. And the bare acceptance of the critical attitude towards the Bible has as yet very imperfectly permeated the bulk of the clergy, or even the instructed religious laity; while very little has been done to modify, except by a silence which often escapes notice, the ordinary religious instruction of pulpit, Bible-class, and Sunday-school. Meanwhile, especially among younger men and women of fair education, there is a widespread unsettlement and uneasiness. There is a vague feeling that the old Orthodoxy is impossible; people suspect that much that was once commonly believed is no longer tenable, but they do not know how much, nor by what it is to be replaced.

The writers of the present work are well aware that the needed reconstruction must take a much more solid and substantial form than a volume of Essays by different authors. The most that such a volume can do is to call attention to the need of such a reconstruction, to show that the need is felt, and to indicate some of the lines on which they believe it ought to take place. The authors cannot claim to speak in the name of any party or organised section of the Church or of the clergy. But they believe that they represent tendencies and points of view which are far more common among the clergy of the Church of England than is commonly supposed by persons whose impressions about clerical opinion are derived from current controversies whether in the secular or the religious press.

A few words must be added as to the relation in which

the Essays included in this volume stand to each other. The writers are agreed that, as Christians and Churchmen no less than as lovers of truth, we have cause to be thankful for the new light which science and criticism have within the last half-century thrown upon religious problems. They are agreed that scientific and critical methods ought to be applied to such questions, and that authority should not be invoked to crush or stifle inquiry. They are agreed that, as the result of the rapid progress in certain departments of human knowledge, which has made the Victorian Age the most revolutionary epoch (in these matters) since the Reformation, a very considerable restatement and even reconstruction of parts of our religious teaching is inevitable; and at the same time they are agreed that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ."

Beyond this they do not profess to be in close agreement. Each writer is responsible solely for his own contributions, and no attempt has been made to conceal the differences which divide them even on matters of importance. Moreover, they have no desire that these Essays should be regarded as a party manifesto. They believe, indeed, that the only reason for the current impression that "the Broad Church party has disappeared" is the fact that "liberal" ideas, which were once characteristic of a very small group of prominent men, have now to so large an extent permeated general Christian thought, that they have ceased to be party watchwords, and have been found capable of harmonious combination with what is permanently valuable in the teaching of other Schools. Among the present writers there are some at least who

would avow a general sympathy with one or other of the great historic Church parties, and who have no wish to dissociate themselves from it. They believe that if liberal theology is to prosper in its work of repairing the breaches in our walls, it must be by influencing both the Catholic and the Protestant elements in the Church—elements which are too deeply rooted in the history of the English Church, and perhaps even in the constitution of human nature, to be either fused or superseded.

Our aim throughout has been to build up, not to pull down, and we are convinced that the work of rebuilding is necessary and urgent. This conviction is based not only on the results of our own studies, but on personal intercourse with a large number of young men—our undergraduate pupils—who may be taken to represent fairly enough the educated class in the rising generation. The decline in the number of candidates for Holy Orders, especially from our Universities, is widely deplored. We have reason to believe that other causes, besides the uncertainty of earning a living wage, are contributing to this decline. And we feel that in these circumstances a great responsibility rests on all teachers of the young who lay on the necks of the disciples any burden beyond "the necessary things," even though "their fathers" may have been able to bear it. And so, if anything that we have written should give pain to some, especially among our elders, whose age and services entitle them to our respect and deference, we would ask them to remember that our work here in Oxford obliges us to think mainly of those who are younger than ourselves, and to study their needs. We trust, therefore, that we may ask for a charitable

judgment, even from those who cannot give us their sympathy and approval.

These Essays deal with the greatest of subjects; they deal with them briefly, and frankly. It is perhaps difficult to avoid some appearance of arrogance in arguing to a conclusion on such topics, and in so small a space. But in truth we are very conscious of the limitations, not only of the short essay, but of our own powers. All we hope to do is to awaken interest, to suggest subjects for careful thought, or at most to give a wider currency to ideas which are for the most part familiar enough to professed students of philosophy and theology.

We are fully alive to the fragmentary and provisional character of such suggestions as have been made in the present work, but it is our earnest hope that it may be of some use to those who are trying to combine, in their own belief and in their teaching as clergymen or otherwise, an openminded pursuit of truth with a heartfelt loyalty to Christ and to the fundamental ideas of Christianity.

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I.

THE ULTIMATE BASIS OF THEISM

By H. RASHDALL

ERRATA

Page 16, line 19. For "man" read "my mind."
„ 19, headline. „ "Subjection and Objection" read "Subjective and Objective."

-- space, which has no existence
apart from relations which can only exist for a mind apprehending
them 12
And this carries with it (*a*) the admission that "things" in space
only exist for consciousness; (*b*) the reality of the self which
knows and feels. This does not destroy the difference between
objective and subjective, fact and fancy 15
Things exist for mind, but not for our minds only. If geology
is not a delusion, the world existed when there were no human or
other "finite" minds to know it. There must, therefore, have
been a Universal or Divine Mind for which the world existed.
This is the metaphysical form of the common belief that the world
must have a maker 20

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I.

THE ULTIMATE BASIS OF THEISM

By H. RASHDALL

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THEISM is not the whole of Christianity, but Theism of the Christian type is a very large and important part of it. It is, I believe, more and more coming to be true that men's attitude towards Christianity is determined mainly by their attitude towards Theism. That this is so is due partly to a change in what they mean by Theism, partly to a change in their interpretation of Christianity. A Deism of the eighteenth-century type might be, and often was, entirely divorced from the Christian attitude towards God. Such a Deism was compatible with an almost entire extinction of the religious emotions, a morality which found no contact with religion except in the form of purely external "sanctions," and which sometimes dispensed even with the sanctions; belief in a future life disappeared altogether. Its view of the relation between God and the world made worship an absurdity, or at least a superfluity; its cold and critical temper was content to regard the great historical religions in general, and Christianity in particular, as artificially invented impostures, or at least as the creations of an irrational "enthusiasm."[1] On the other hand, while Christianity was regarded either as a supernaturally authenticated guarantee of "Natural Religion," or as a supernaturally authenticated appendix of rigid and admittedly unintelligible dogma, it was clear that the distinctively Christian elements of Religion might

[1] These remarks are meant to apply to the type of thought combated by Bishop Butler in the *Analogy*. But Deism was a word vaguely used, and was often applied by opponents to latitudinarian Churchmen like Archbishop Tillotson. To many even of the avowed "Deists" the above description would be quite inapplicable. Their Deism often amounted to Theism in the sense of this Essay, though their empirical Philosophy led them to exaggerate the separateness of God from the universe.

easily be sloughed off and leave the underlying Deism just where it was before. At the present day minds capable of religious feeling naturally turn towards Christianity, conceived as a religion of enthusiastic loyalty towards the Person and the ethical ideal of the historical Jesus, with sympathy and yearning. The human side of Christianity is readily accepted. To many minds it is just the view of the nature of God which Christianity presupposes that creates intellectual difficulties. But a Theism of the Christian type once accepted, the way is prepared for the ascription of a unique position in the religious history of the world to Him who was at once the first great teacher of that Theism, and the supreme embodiment of the ethical ideal which has historically been associated with it. I do not mean to say that there remain no difficulties and perplexities either in the traditional dogmas about the Person of Christ or about the miraculous element in the narratives of his life. I do not mean to say that there does not remain an important difference between a Unitarianism or Christian Theism of the modern type and a Catholicism or Trinitarianism of the kind which seeks to place itself in harmony with modern modes of thought. But I do believe that the difference between what one may vaguely call an inside attitude and an outside attitude (whether sympathetic or unsympathetic) towards the Christian Faith is coming more and more to depend upon the view that is taken of Theism. Especially is this the case with minds which have passed through the discipline of Philosophy, and with whom (for the most part) the alternative to Christian Theism is not a blank Materialism, or a confident Agnosticism, but a Theism of a vague, impersonal type, exhibiting every shade of thought and feeling intermediate between a very real belief that the ultimate principle of things is spiritual and a Pantheism which for every religious and

ethical purpose is indistinguishable from the purest Naturalism.

I propose in the following pages to try, in a systematic but necessarily very brief and imperfect manner, to suggest what is implied in the Theism presupposed by Christianity; and this may best be done by indicating the grounds on which, as I believe, such a Theism rests. And here we are at once met by a difficulty. The strongest argument for Theism is, in its fully developed form, a metaphysical argument. To some minds this will be thought to amount to an admission that such a Theism can never be the religion of the modern world. How, it may be said, is Christianity to be accepted by the world in general, if it is impossible to be a Christian on any rational grounds without first being a metaphysician? Does not this involve, as a necessary consequence, that Christianity must be possible only on the one hand for a small circle of professed metaphysical students, and on the other for those who are content to accept their religion on authority? We need not shrink from the admission that for large numbers of people almost wholly, and for nearly all to some extent, religious belief must rest upon authority, though it will never rest entirely upon authority. For people will not accept upon authority what does not meet the needs of their own moral and rational nature; and the fact that a creed does meet their needs is, as far as it goes, an argument. And it were much to be desired that some metaphysical training should be diffused among a much larger number of people than now enjoy it, especially among those who are concerned with the teaching of Religion in a sceptical age. A certain elementary course of metaphysical reading might well be recommended to all well-educated people who feel the need of getting at the real grounds upon which religious belief must rest, and might be still more widely recommended had our philosophers

learnt how to imitate the lucidity of the old English philosophical Classics without reproducing their metaphysical mistakes. But the main reply to the objection above indicated is that there is no absolute line of demarcation between the kind of arguments upon which theistic belief is based in thoughtful men who have never studied formal metaphysics and the arguments of the professed metaphysician. All men who think about things in general are metaphysicians more or less. The plain man who has never opened a book of geometry, or even of arithmetic, has nevertheless some ideas about space and quantity or number, and those ideas are mathematical ideas. And so, the metaphysician is simply the man who thinks out the problems about which all who think about things in general have thought to some extent, who thinks them out in a more thorough and systematic manner than other people, and who has acquainted himself with the best that has been thought and written about such subjects by others.

I believe therefore that I shall best serve my purpose by not shrinking from the attempt to express, in the most popular and untechnical way that is possible, what I believe the Theistic argument comes to when it is fully thought out. It must be admitted that to acquire the metaphysical attitude of mind, to see clearly what the ultimate metaphysical question means, and fully to grasp any possible answer to it, generally requires a rather long course of gradual habituation. But I trust that some who may not be prepared to accept the particular line of argument which will be here offered in its full extent, may nevertheless be able to accept it sufficiently to acquiesce in the religious or theological part of my conclusion. If that should be so, it will not mean that they have substituted some false or merely plausible grounds of belief for the true ones, or allowed their creed to be dictated by authority

or emotion or prejudice. For, as has been suggested, the common-sense arguments for theistic belief are, as I believe, only the metaphysical arguments imperfectly thought out. It is needless to say that such a statement of my argument as is possible within the limits of this book will fail to satisfy the professed metaphysician. It is not so much, however, in the statement of an argument as in the reply to objections that it is difficult to combine metaphysical thoroughness and accuracy with general intelligibility. I must therefore appeal to the benevolence of the metaphysical reader (if such there should be), and ask him to believe that I am not unaware of the existence of many possible objections which I am obliged to pass over, and that I have no desire to slur over or minimise them.

I may add that there is nothing in the argument which pretends to be in any way new. The greater part of it is simply the common property of all thorough-going Idealists. If in some parts of the argument I adopt a position which will not commend itself to all genuinely theistic Idealists, I venture to hope that my differences from them will be for the most part a difference of emphasis rather than a fundamental difference of principle. It will be unnecessary to specify my obligations to the acknowledged masters to whose inspiration is due anything in these pages that merits attention.

To the "plain man" it usually appears self-evident that matter is a thing which exists "in itself," which could conceivably be supposed to exist even if no consciousness existed or ever had existed in the world. He may, indeed, if he is a Theist, disbelieve that matter does exist or ever has, as a matter of actual fact, existed without mind; he may even go so far as to say that it is unthinkable that matter should in the first instance have come into existence without mind, or that the Mind which brought it

into existence should cease to exist; but, if all mind in the Universe could be supposed to be suddenly extinguished, there would appear to him nothing essentially absurd or self-contradictory in the idea that matter would go on existing all the same. That is the notion which lies at the root of all difficulties about Theism. The denial of this view of things is what is meant by Idealism: and Idealism is, as I believe, the necessary basis of Theism for minds which want to get to the bottom of things.

The line of thought which leads to the adoption of this view may best be mastered by a perusal of Bishop Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge.* However much Bishop Berkeley's argument requires to be corrected by the criticism of that later form of Idealism which begins with Kant, his writings remain the classical expression of the view which all genuine Idealists agree in accepting as the basis of a true theory of the Universe—the view that "matter" or "things" exist only in mind or "for" mind, that the idea of matter without mind is an unthinkable absurdity. I will here attempt only a very brief résumé of Bishop Berkeley's line of thought, advising the reader not previously acquainted with metaphysics to read Berkeley for himself, if he wishes to understand it thoroughly, and to meet with a fuller answer to the objections which will inevitably occur to him.[1]

The plain man (and the most accomplished non-metaphysical man of science will probably for the present purpose be only too eager to place himself on the side of the plain man) declares to us that matter exists "in itself," and that it is "in itself" exactly what he thinks it to be. He sees before him a tree, and he tells us that the tree is just what it appears to him to be. Very well, the tree

[1] A more mature statement of his view is contained in the *Dialogues of Hylous and Philonous.* To the reader who wishes to appreciate the advance which modern Idealism has made upon Berkeley without grappling with the difficulties of Kant, Ferrier's *Institutes of Metaphysic* may be commended.

appears to him green. "Is the tree green in itself?" "Yes," says the first thought of the plain man, "of course the tree is really green in itself." "Then supposing no being endowed with an eye had ever existed in the world, supposing no spiritual being had ever felt or seen what we feel and see when we look upon a wood in early summer, the tree would still be green?" Here probably our plain friend will begin to hesitate; but, if he has a tincture of science, he will probably murmur something about rays of light or waves of ether, some of which are absorbed by the tree and others thrown back into space—rays which are there all the same whether they actually strike a living optic nerve or not. And then we shall have to point out that waves of ether are one thing; the idea of "green" is something quite different. A man blind from his birth may know all about waves and ether and optic nerves; he may pass a brilliant examination in the science of optics, but he has no idea of what the seeing man means by a sensation of green. And then probably our plain man will be ready to confess that the colour and the sound and the smell of external objects do not (in strictness of speech) exist in the bodies, but are effects produced by the bodies upon mind; the ideas of "secondary qualities" (as Locke called them) exist only in the mind, but the "primary qualities"—the size, the shape, the solidity of things — these, he will still insist, are in the things; and the "secondary qualities" are really certain modifications of the primary qualities (*i.e.* of the arrangement of the ultimate particles of matter) which produce the ideas of colour, sound, etc., in my mind. The primary qualities are in the things: but how do I know they are there? When I say that the paper before me is square, all that I can really mean is that the white appearance in my mind is of this shape, and that if I touch it I shall likewise find my tactual impressions

arranged in a certain way. When I say that it is thin, I can mean only that on holding it up edgeways the edge is seen or felt to be thin. When I say it is solid, I mean that I cannot see or touch the table underneath it without removing it or making a hole in it. "Then do you mean," it may be objected, "that the paper has no existence when I leave the room?" Certainly not, for in the first place I can still think of it, and by being thought of by me, it has (Berkeley would say) "entered my mind and become an idea";[1] and when I so think it, I can only think of it as something which I should see and feel under certain conditions—if I came back into the room and no one had removed it. But it would certainly be meaningless to say that it exists if nobody ever had or ever would either see or think of it as being seen. This line of thought may possibly bring our plain man to the admission that what we experience immediately is simply certain feelings, which, when being reflected on, are built up into objects of thought; that, do what we will, we cannot get outside our thoughts; by inference we may, indeed, come to believe that other people also have similar feelings and know similar objects: nay, when we make abstraction of the thinker and concentrate our attention only on the thing thought of—the matter or "content" of the thought, as it is called—we may very probably assert that when you and I both think of this sheet of paper, or of paper in general, we are thinking about *the same* thing. But still the "thing" can only mean what we think of, what we should experience under certain conditions, or what somebody else might think of or experience under certain circumstances.

[1] It is true that Berkeley did not sufficiently distinguish this existence for thought, which it has equally whether I am looking at it or merely thinking it, from the actual perception of it when it is present, and prepared the way for Hume's attempt to reduce the memory of a sensation to a "less lively" idea or feeling of the same kind.

Our plain man will now perhaps be disposed to admit that *immediately* we are in contact only with ideas, or rather, as Berkeley's critics rightly insist, with "objects of thought"; but he will go on to evade the force of the admission by contending that, though primary qualities, no less than secondary, are found on reflection to be known by us simply as objects of our thought, as something inside our minds, yet the things as they are in themselves are really *like* the things that we know, that the primary qualities as they present themselves to my mind are really *like* the secondary qualities as they would still be in the things were there no thought or consciousness whatever in the world. To this we may reply in the words of Berkeley: "But, say you, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things like them, whereof they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind in an unthinking substance. I answer, an idea can be like nothing but an idea; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure. If we look but never so little into our own thoughts, we shall find it impossible for us to conceive a likeness except only between our ideas. Again, I ask whether those supposed originals or external things, of which our ideas are the pictures or representations, be themselves perceivable or no? If they are, then they are ideas, and we have gained our point; but if you think they are not, I appeal to anyone whether it be sense to assert a colour is like something which is invisible; hard or soft, like something which is intangible; and so of the rest."[1]

Another way of illustrating the essentially unmeaning character of saying that things apart from thought are "in themselves" what they are to the thinking mind, is to call attention to the essentially relative character of

[1] BERKELEY, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, §. 8.

these primary qualities which we are so apt to think of as existing in the supposed "things in themselves," of which we can give no account except that they are not the same things as those we think. The quality which is most apt to force itself upon us as something which belongs to the things and not to our thought of them is the quality of solidity; and, whatever else solidity may mean, I suppose everyone will admit that the property of occupying space is an essential element in it. Without pressing the question what exactly can be meant by "occupying," it is enough to take the bare idea of spaciality. "Things in themselves" are, it is contended, in space, and would be still in space though thought were to perish out of the universe. What, then, we must insist, is meant by the "spaciality," the size, the shape, etc., of the things which occupy space? Whatever a thing is in itself, it would still be that thing, one must suppose, whatever became of other things. Therefore my paper would still be square, though all other things in the world were to be annihilated, and the space in which these things were. Yet what would this mean? What would be the meaning of a square foot of space apart from the relation of that square foot to the surrounding space? Or what would the size of my paper mean if there were no things and no space outside it? Or (to confine ourselves to the "thing" itself), the squareness of the thing belongs to the thing itself, it will be urged, not to its relation to other things. But then this "thing" to which I attribute the property of occupying space is made up of parts, and apart from the relation of these parts to each other, what would be the meaning of its being six inches square? "Yes," it may be replied, "it is true that a composite whole like a piece of paper is made up of parts; such a thing is no doubt made what it is by the relations between its parts, but it is the

parts that really exist in themselves." "How small a part?" I ask. And then, if the objector knows something of chemistry, he will perhaps tell us that the atom of some chemical element is the real "thing in itself," or some smaller particle, which (according to speculative modern chemistry) goes to the making of the chemical element. *That* would still be what it is apart from all relation to other things. And the atom occupies space? "Certainly." Well, then, if it occupies space, it must have a top and a bottom, a right and a left. Still the being of the space-occupying atom is found to be made up of relations. We never get rid of the essential relativity of this "solidity," which of all its qualities most decidedly seems to belong to the thing itself. Everywhere we encounter nothing but relations, until we get down to the point without parts and without magnitude, and that surely is not a something which can be conceived of as existing apart from its relations to other points, nor can that which has no magnitude be regarded as a "thing." The very quality then which is most especially supposed to belong to the individual thing as it is in itself turns out to be infected through and through with relativity; this property at least seems to belong not to the thing, but to be made up of relations between things. And is a relation anything apart from the mind which conceives the relation, which holds together the two related terms and apprehends the relation between them? If not, and if space be made up of relations, then space must be "subjective" in the sense of being made by mind, of having existence only relatively to the apprehending subject or mind. And the subjectivity of space carries with it the subjectivity of everything in space.

"Yes, but you can't have relations apart from something to relate; the relation of the things may only exist for the mind that puts them together, but there must

be something there to be related." Not "there," I must reply, for we have admitted that the *thereness* of the thing was part of its relatedness—meaningless apart from its relation to other things or points in space. What is the solidity of a thing apart from the relation between its parts and its relations to other things? "Well," it may be replied, "it resists you when you press it; it is something that you can touch, that hurts you when you stumble upon it, and so on." Yes, but here we are back again at feelings which it was admitted could not be apart from some subject which feels.

Feelings and relations[1] are all that we can find in things, however long we think about them. We may no doubt think about a thing which we have never touched or seen, or had any kind of sensible experience of, but that merely means that we know what it would be found to be like if we or some other mind were to come into such contact with it. Berkeley was no doubt wrong in failing to distinguish adequately between an "idea" in the sense of the present image or sensation and an "idea" in the sense of some quality which can be thought of when the feeling is gone; but then after all the quality we think of is only a thought of what the feeling would be like if we did experience it.[2] If nobody ever did experience or ever could experience any

[1] I fully recognise that *pure* feeling, feeling without relation, is a mere abstraction, as much so as relation without something to relate.

[2] It is perfectly true that our thought of a quality is an abstract universal which is never actually the same as, and never *perfectly* reproduces what I or anyone else has ever experienced in actual present perception, but still it is an attempt to reproduce it. What we experience is never merely blue in general, but the judgment that the thing has such and such a quality is only true because and in so far as the thing actually produces the feeling which we struggle to reproduce in thought. The metaphysicians who have insisted on this point with most penetration never seem adequately to grapple with the question, "What is there really in common between the actual perception and the universal idealised *content*"?—what in short a "content" really is. But such questions need not be answered for our present purpose.

one particular sensation which is called green, the judgment "trees are green" would be false or meaningless. Feelings actual or possible—feelings actually experienced or idealised by thought, and relations between such actual or idealised feelings—besides these there is nothing in "things." If anyone still insists that this is not all, let him tell us what more he wants in his "things." If he cannot tell us of any property that belongs to the things whose self-existence he so passionately asserts, the assertion must surely be meaningless. If it means anything to him, he can surely tell us what it is: and when he tells us something about things that cannot be easily shown to be either a feeling or a quality meaningless apart from what is actually felt, or a relation, his assertion will have a meaning and may be discussed. Till then, we shall assume that everything we know, everything we can intelligibly assert to exist must be either a feeling or feelable quality or a relation or some combination of the two. Feelings cannot exist apart from a feeling consciousness, relations can only exist for a relating intelligence. The "esse" of things is *for* mind. But of course the things thought or felt cannot exist apart from the mind which thinks and feels. I cannot stay to dwell upon either the really difficult problems, or the fanciful and over-subtle ones, which may be raised as to the "reality" of the mind or self. It will be enough to assume that in a sense sufficient for every purpose of the following argument, those who have accepted the contention that there are no things apart from mind will be prepared to admit the existence of the mind itself. We must not, of course, take the mind out of all relation to the objects of its thought. It may reasonably enough be contended that mind apart from thing, "subject" apart from "object," is as unintelligible as matter or thing apart from mind. But when we are clear that by "object"

or "thing" we only mean that which the mind thinks or feels, and that no independence or self-existence can be attributed to the thing, the distinction between "mind" and "thing" becomes merely a distinction within the mind. The mind undoubtedly does distinguish itself from the things which it thinks, but that does not show that the things which it thinks have any existence apart from the thought which thinks them or from some other spirit's thought. I am not my toothache, and yet nobody thinks that my toothache has any existence apart from me. "The mind"—the subject, to speak in more technical language—has no existence apart from some object or other, but that object may be in ultimate analysis simply a state or experience of the subject or of some other subject.

And this last point brings me to an objection which will probably be occurring to the reader. "Do you really mean," I may be asked, "that the world is as much merely a state of man as my toothache? Are you not breaking down all distinction between subjective and objective, between fancy and fact, between reality and delusion?" A complete and adequate answer to this question would involve a system of Philosophy, and as a basis for it a system of Logic. But within the limits now at my disposal an answer may be suggested under three heads.

(*a*) There is always a difference between the idea in my head and an objective fact. Even when I confine myself to my own sensations, there is a difference between the sensation considered simply as such and the judgment that I have a sensation. The feeling—the toothache, it may be—is purely mine, and nobody else's. It exists only while it is felt; it did not exist yesterday, and will not exist to-morrow. But the judgment that I have a toothache is a statement of objective truth. That is true for me, and it is true for all the world. Anyone who,

though he feels nothing of my toothache, judges or thinks that I have not got a toothache is in error. No wishes, no thinking away of that toothache on my part or anyone else's part will cause it to be any the less a fact; it is part of the truth about things; anyone who does not know that that toothache has been felt does not know all that there is to know. And the fact that I should have a toothache to-day always was true, and the fact that I have had toothache will always remain true, long after my aches have ceased and my tooth has mingled with the dust. My toothache, in short, is subjective; the fact that I have a toothache is objective. There would still be a difference between subjective and objective, though I were the only consciousness in the universe. My perceptions as such are subjective, but the fact that I have them, and the laws which determine the conditions under which I shall have such and such a perception are objective.

(*b*) On the basis of this distinction it becomes plain that, even supposing I were the only consciousness in the universe, there would still be a distinction between fact and fancy, between an idea in my head and an objective fact. I may have an idea that I shall have no toothache, but that idea—if by idea is meant a piece of knowledge as knowledge—is false, as I discover to my cost when to-morrow comes, and with it the toothache. Of course, considered as an "idea in my head," as a piece of experience, as a "psychological event," that idea of mine has a reality of its own, but it is not the same reality as the toothache. What I judge is false; the fact that I judge is as much a fact as toothache. My delusions and my toothache are both of them realities in their way, but they are different realities. Hence, even supposing there were no other consciousness in the universe than his own, there would be a very real and important distinction between the snakes that a man merely imagines in a fit of

delirium tremens and an *anguis in herba.* The snakes that people his disordered imagination do not bite; the snakes that waylay his path in Africa do. The chimæra has an existence of its own in the world of art and literature and primitive imagination; and that world is a part of the whole world of reality, but it has a very different place from that occupied by lions and tigers.[1]

(*c*) So far I have assumed my consciousness to be the only one in the universe. I will not now go into the question of the intellectual process by which we come to believe that there are other minds than ours in the world. I assume that in some way we have become aware of that fact. And when we are aware of that fact, the most simple and obvious distinction between fact and fancy, imagination and reality, between subjective and objective, comes to this: we call "subjective" that which I only perceive, "objective" that which (under certain conditions) others will perceive also. Thought always deals (*i.e.* true thought does deal, and all thought purports to deal) with objective truths; but then, it is all-important to remember, truths are not realities. They would not be true unless somebody at some time or other actually experienced or felt something. Thus in its way my toothache is an objective fact. But we call it subjective because it is only I that feel it. Equally so with the snake seen in *delirium tremens;* that snake is a very formidable reality to the delirious person. But he is in error only when he supposes that his snake has an "objective reality," when he thinks that other people see what he sees, or when he supposes that what can be seen by him can also be touched or eaten by himself or others.

(*d*) One more point may be necessary, and this must be merely glanced at, though in a metaphysical treatise it

[1] Of course I here treat snakes and lions simply as objects of experience, apart altogether from their consciousness.

would occupy much ground. The common distinction between subjective and objective, between my private experience and the world of things, turns partly upon the fact that the world of things occupies space; my subjective experiences do not. No doubt my physical pains are localised—probably even the most spiritual of my emotions; but they are not "things," partly because the experience which I have at that point of space is one which others cannot have there, partly because the feeling is not the feeling of touch and of resisted pressure which is implied by the true object or thing. And, though the presence of an object in space means ultimately that I and others do and will continue to have experiences of touch at a certain point of space, the notion of space itself is not a feeling. Space is the creation of thought; the idea of a permanent object "occupying" space, consisting of parts existing side by side simultaneously, cannot be resolved into any series of merely subjective feelings succeeding one another in my or anybody else's mind. The idea of space and the correlative conception of extended substance is a creation of thought, and has the "objectivity" belonging to thought. The world of things in space therefore—unlike my pleasures, pains, and emotions — is a world which is the same for all; but still it exists for mind and not outside mind, and it would not be real at all if that which we think did not reveal itself in actual experience under certain conditions to some actually feeling conscience. The back of the moon is real, though nobody (it may be) has seen it or climbed its mountains, because it exists for thought now; but that thought would be shown not to be a thought of reality, a true thought, if somebody got round to the back of it and failed to experience the sensations of touch and sight which we believe he would experience.

The attempt to distinguish between thought and reality

has brought us to a difficulty. We have been compelled to admit the reality of the things which no eye of man has seen and no hand has touched, because under certain circumstances they would be seen or thought; if that be so, they exist only when they are actually thought of. But, it may be said, does not this make Science a delusion? Geology tells us that the earth was once a mass of molten matter, and before that of gaseous matter. When no mind of man or animal was in existence to feel that intolerable heat, or even to think of it, in what consisted the reality of that world which science reveals to us? Can it be said that it was a real world *then* because we infer its existence *now?* Does the world of the past begin to exist when its past existence first dawned upon the mind of an eighteenth-century geologist? What of all the undiscovered facts about the universe, of all the truth which is waiting to be discovered, but is not yet discovered? Does that existence consist in a perpetual potentiality? Can a potentiality exist by itself? According to the view we have hitherto taken, the world was once, in a sense, all potentiality! What is meant by potential existence? A thing which *is* one thing actually may be potentially something else, *i.e.* it will turn into something else under certain conditions. The egg is potentially a chicken, but can there be such a thing as a potential chicken which is yet actually nothing? What sort of existence is this—an existence which *is not* anything, but might be something under certain circumstances? Have we not affirmed the existence of something which we admit to be a nonentity? And then if the world was once nothing except potentially, how can it ever have become an actuality? Can that which is not produce, give birth to, cause that which is? Can the ground or cause of the existent be found in the non-existent, of the real in the unreal? These questions surely need

only to be propounded to be answered in the negative. If we have seen reason to believe that nothing really exists except mind and that which exists for mind, it is clearly not *our* minds that have always existed; it is clearly not the case that what you or I know and feel has reality, while that of which *we* have no sort of knowledge or experience has none. If therefore that which is not experienced or even thought of by any human consciousness is to have any existence at all, there must be a Mind for which all things exist always: we must say that the fiery mass of the pre-animal solar system existed always in a universal Mind, and that in his Mind there exists to-day whatever stars the astronomer's telescope has not yet sighted. Such a Universal Mind it is that we mean when we speak of God.

The existence of God is thus shown to be an absolute necessity of thought. It is not "proved" in the sense of being demonstrated in the way that one particular truth of science can be demonstrated as logically flowing from some other particular truth. Nor does it appear to me at least that the existence of God is self-evident in the sense in which the axioms of mathematics are self-evident. But it is a belief which is necessary to explain our experience. It is found on reflection to be necessarily implied or involved in all our experience.

We cannot understand the world of which we form a part except upon this assumption of a Universal Mind, for which, or in which, all that is exists. Such is the line of thought which presents itself to some of us as the one absolutely convincing and logically irrefragable argument for establishing the existence of God. And yet I know that so strange are these metaphysical conceptions until one has become familiarised with them by slow habituation, that very acute minds may wholly fail to make the admission on which all turns—that "things" can only

exist for mind. Are we to admit that no one can rationally believe in the existence of God until he can be brought to make this admission? Far from it. It is highly probable that some of my readers who may fail to accept the metaphysical theory known as Idealism, who may fail to be convinced that things exist *only* for mind, may yet be led by the argument we have gone through to reflect how great is the assumption that matter can exist without mind, and they may find in this line of thought some reinforcement of the common-sense conviction that mind cannot ultimately be simply the product of blind, unthinking matter—that however real or self-existent matter may be when once in existence, it cannot have existed entirely by itself, and must have originally owed its existence and the orderly laws by which it is governed to mind. The metaphysical argument is after all only a fuller and more explicit development of what is implied in the commonplace conviction of the mass of men that the world must have had a Creator, and of others who, though they may find difficulties in the idea of an absolute beginning of matter, cannot conceive of matter except as perpetually dominated and controlled by mind. Such persons may find their conviction strengthened by the following considerations.

Let us return to the main thread of our argument. All things must exist *for* God, must be eternally present in the mind of God. But what do we mean by "present"? What do we mean by the thought of God? It is best frankly to confess at once that we do not know. It is common with writers of the Hegelian School (or rather with that right wing of the Hegelian School which really believes in the existence of a divine Consciousness, and not in a mere deity of abstract "categories"[1]) to assume

[1] The Hegelian tendency to mistake the abstract form or categories of self-consciousness, firstly for the self and then for God or Reality as a whole, has been powerfully criticised by Mr. Herbert Bradley, and by Prof. Pringle-Patterson (Seth) in his *Hegelianism and Personality*.

that the knowledge of God is simply the same as our knowledge of things when we think of them apart from present perception, except that our knowledge is in part while God's knowledge is of the whole. They never seem to realise how absolutely a reference to actual perception is implied in all our knowledge. I can think of the greenness of the tree, but that word "green" would mean nothing to me apart from what I have once seen. I may generalise the idea of green, and make abstraction of much that was actually contained in each particular perception. What I saw was either light green or dark green: what I think is simply green. My idea of green in general excludes the difference between light green and dark green; if so, it is of course an idea of something which I could not possibly see, for the seen green must be either light or dark or medium. Or you may say that (if I know *all* about green) my idea of green would include all these alternatives; it is the idea of a colour which may be light or dark or medium, and which must be one of them. But still it is meaningless apart from what I have actually experienced; and, when I think of it, the notion is meaningless, apart from what I or some other being might experience. And experiences which I have not had I can only think of by some more or less vague analogy to what I have experienced. I can suppose a pain intenser than I have ever felt, but such conceptions mean to me very little indeed, though the knowledge may be quite enough to guide action. It is the same even with those elements of our experience which we are right in referring not to sense, but to thought. My idea of space in general, or of a triangle in general, is not derived from mere sense, but it presupposes sensible experience, and is meaningless apart from it. I may think of a triangle in general which is not either a large triangle or a small one, but such thoughts are abstractions, not realities. Triangularity is simply the

name for the shape, alike in all, of the triangular things which I have seen or felt, or might feel and think. The shape is not real apart from the things which have that shape, and the things are perceivable only by sensation. Everywhere the reality of the objects which we know has more or less immediate reference to the facts of perception. And therefore it is meaningless to ascribe a knowledge of the various thoughts of qualities which in us are derived from present perceptions to a consciousness which never has had, or will have, those perceptions. We may conceive obscurely God as knowing what things look like to us who see, though He sees not. But that does not remove the difficulty as to how a consciousness which does not feel can know what it is to feel. I offer no solution of the difficulty ; I only protest that the idea of a purely thinking consciousness conveys no intelligible meaning to us. We can only think of the divine Consciousness by the analogy of our own. Such conceptions must necessarily be inadequate, but we do not make them less inadequate by attributing to God only the more abstract elements in our thoughts and eliminating altogether the actual experiences which give our thoughts all their meaning. It may be that the divine Consciousness is less unlike our thinking activity than it is unlike our present perceptions. It may be that the difference between actual present perceptions and the thought of what may be perceived does not exist at all in God ; certainly we cannot suppose that the difference for God can be the same as it is for us, if only because present perception is with us localised in a bodily organ. We can only say that the same line of thought which leads us to believe that the world which we know fragmentarily—with a knowledge that comes and goes, and always has its origin and starting-point in present perception or feeling—does exist somehow in the Consciousness of God, involves also

the inference that in God's Consciousness there must be feeling also as well as thought, or something analogous to feeling as well as something analogous to thought.

At this point it will be well to stop and take account of the conclusions to which we have been so far led. We have tried to make it plain that the existence of God is a necessity of thought. But what, from our present point of view, does "God" mean. So far it merely means a Spirit who knows, and in some sense experiences, all reality. The present argument leads us up to the idea of a Spirit who knows all that is real, without whom nothing that is known could exist—except, indeed, the spirits or selves whose relation to the divine we have not as yet examined. A divine mind, but not a divine will. For all that appears so far, we might remain with the conclusion that God's relation to the world is the same as ours, except that our knowledge is only in part. We might say that the divine Mind makes nature, but only in the sense in which human minds make nature. There is nothing in this argument to suggest that God is the cause of Nature, that the events of the world's history are guided by his will, or fulfil his purposes. And here some Idealists stop. How impotent and valueless for any practical purpose such a Theism is apt to be, if we do not subtly import into it religious ideas and associations which really come from another source, I need hardly stay to point out. For aught that appears to the contrary, this Idealist Deity might be thought of as good, and yet the world to which by some unintelligible but inevitable necessity He finds himself linked be very bad, and going from bad to worse. And what after all can we mean by calling a will-less deity "good"? What possible grounds of hope or of aspiration can there be in such an idea? What emotion could he inspire, what worship could he merit? Such a deity, occupying the position

of *otium cum dignitate* ascribed to the gods of Epicurus, would be as little worshipful as a category or an Equator. The argument by itself can prove little that is of value for religion or for morality: but it forms nevertheless the necessary starting-point for a Theism which may be worth more. If we are to carry on the argument, we must start afresh, and face the problem of Causation.

When we were asking the plain man to say what he meant by the "thing" which he insisted must be *there* whether he felt it or not, there was one element in his consciousness to which we did not do justice. At bottom his refusal to be satisfied with any explanation of the thing that made it merely as a state or phase of his own consciousness, lay in his conviction that the cause or source of the feelings which he experienced did not lie in himself. Of some of his experiences he does find the cause in himself. He is conscious of being the cause of his own actions, that is to say, he is conscious of determining his own volitions,[1] and within certain limits (determined by physical facts not under his own control) he finds that these volitions produce effects in the world of his experience. He wills to eat, and (if his organism be in a healthy state and the food within his reach) the eating follows. But where no such volition has been exercised, the experiences that happen to him are not, he feels, caused by himself; many of them are unforeseen, many of them are unwelcome. *He* does not cause them: yet his reason tells him that they must have a cause. No doubt when he insists that the cause of his experience must lie *there*, outside himself, in the space which is occupied by the perceived object, he is forgetting that this very space is part of the experience for which he seeks an

[1] Nothing that follows necessarily involves what is commonly called the Freewill or Indeterminist theory. The argument is satisfied if we accept the fact of "Self-determination" in that sense which is quite compatible with a non-materialistic Determinism.

explanation. The fact that the impact of one thing upon another in space is followed by changes in that other thing makes it seem natural to explain the appearance of a phænomenon in his experience as due to the impact of an external thing upon his mind. But things are outside one another; they are not outside the mind: the mind is not an object in space. Hence he has no right to say that the cause of my perceiving a tree must lie *outside* my physical organism, and *in* the tree. The space-occupyingness of the tree is as much part of the phænomenon of which I want the explanation as any other quality in the object as perceived or thought of by me. But a cause for my there and then seeing and touching the tree there must be. It is a necessity of thought to suppose that nothing which has a beginning can be without a cause why it should begin to be.

Primitive man was disposed to account for all the changes of nature, or at least for any change involving motion not obviously accounted for by external impact, as due to spiritual beings like himself. He was conscious of being a cause: his reason demanded a cause other than himself for movement which he did not cause: he naturally inferred that the cause of phænomena must be found in the same sort of cause outside him.

With the progress of knowledge, however, men came to observe a certain regular order and succession in their involuntary experiences. One region of nature after another was removed from the domain of those things of which there seemed to be no other explanation than the passions or caprices of individuals like himself, and was reduced to the sphere of regular law or uniformity. The observed uniformity of nature involved changes in men's ideas about nature: (1) The discovery that all changes in nature are interconnected and interdependent, that the world is a whole, all the parts of which are mutually

interdependent, made it impossible to explain it as the result of independent, jarring, and mutually hostile wills. If the universe was to be referred to minds, science made it evident that it must be referred to a single mind. (2) The idea of caprice, irregularity, unaccountability which clave to the older form of anthropomorphism, was replaced by the idea of order, plan, design. If nature was referred to a mind, it was a rational mind: it was in man's reason rather than in his desires and caprices that men came to find whatever analogy they still assumed between man and the universal cause. The same growing knowledge which destroyed the idea of a multitude of jarring personalities substituted the idea of a single rational plan for the idea of many inconsistent, mutable caprices. The purposes of nature, for those to whom nature still seemed to imply a purpose, became one purpose.

For many minds the observed regularity of nature, carrying with it the power of prediction and the power of limited control over nature, has come to be so intimately associated with the idea of Causality that it has substituted itself for that idea itself. The phænomenal conditions under which an observed phænomenon is found to occur are commonly spoken of as the cause of that phænomenon. Some have even brought themselves to believe that it is self-evident that nature must be uniform; to such persons the idea of interference with the observed course of nature by a spiritual agency, finite or infinite, seems not only gratuitous and contrary to experience, but an *a priori* absurdity or unthinkability, like the idea of two straight lines enclosing a space. Of course, the fact that nature is observed to be uniform supplies a strong presumption that the ultimate cause of nature does work uniformly; probable arguments are always based upon partial knowledge. All the knowledge we have of the

Cause goes to show that that Cause is uniform in its working: hence the probability that it will always be found to work uniformly is enormously more probable than the contrary supposition. But I certainly find no difficulty in thinking that A might follow B a hundred times, and not follow it the hundred and first time. Mere succession is not causation. A succession which does not explain itself when it happens once is not any more intelligible when it happens a hundred times. The actual uniformity of nature is as much in need of explanation as a conceivable irregularity. The uniformity of nature (in Lotze's language) is a necessary postulate of all scientific reasoning; it is no necessity of thought.

The idea of uniform succession among phænomena does not satisfy my idea of Causality. What would satisfy it? We observed before that there is one kind of causality of which we are immediately conscious, *i.e.* the causality of our own wills. It is sometimes said that the idea of causality is got from our own experience of volition: and to this mode of statement it is rightly objected that no experience of succession could put the idea of Causality into a mind which lacked the concept. A mere observation of mental determination followed by an observed motion of limbs could never transform the idea of succession into the idea of Causality.[1] The idea of Causality is, indeed, an *a priori* category of thought. We are by nature capable of asking the question "Why?" No experience could make us believe that something happened without some reason why it should happen.

[1] This is only an objection to the attempt to get the idea of "Causality" out of "experience" understood in the sense of the Sensationalistic Empiricist. The position that we are immediately conscious of exercising activity seems to be practically indistinguishable from the position that the idea of Causality is logically *a priori*, but that we become aware of it only in our consciousness of volition. For a psychological defence of the view here assumed—that we are conscious of exercising activity—the reader may be referred to Dr. Stout's *Analytical Psychology*, especially Book II. chap. i.

What, then, is implied in this idea of Causality? It seems to involve two elements: (1) the idea of force or power; (2) the idea of final cause. If the idea of power be objected to as vague, it is impossible to give a definition or explanation of an ultimate idea: but perhaps for some minds it may seem a preferable mode of statement if I say that the ground or explanation of anything that happens must be found in something which already exists. Events must have their ground in reality. "Ex nihilo nihil fit." We cannot believe that something should suddenly appear if nothing existed before; or that something should appear which has no connexion with what was in existence already. To put the matter in yet another way, we necessarily believe that the present state of a thing is connected with its past states: the explanation of the present must be found in the past, or rather in something which persists through past and present. But that is not the whole of the explanation. If I am told that A *is* A because it *was* B, I may still ask why? Why did A become B? and my curiosity is not satisfied until I know the purpose for which A became B. If I find my furniture disturbed during my absence, I ask "why" did this happen. When I discover that X did it, I am partially satisfied, but I still press the question "Why?" And when I am told that X did it by way of a joke, and that X is a kind of being to whom such a joke appears a good or rational end of action, then I am satisfied: then the occurrence is explained. It is this union of power with purpose which satisfies my idea of Causality. And such a union can only be found in a consciousness; it is only in consciousness, so far as we know or can conceive, that a final cause can become an efficient cause, that power and end can meet, that the idea which is found good can pass into an actuality. The idea of Cause is derived from our volition in the sense

that all our ideas or concepts are derived from our experience; and it is in all probability, as a matter of psychological fact, a concept which we should not have unless we were willing as well as thinking intelligences. At all events in our experience of volition, and in that experience alone, we are conscious of actually exercising Causality. There alone we find a content for the bare abstract notion of "Cause." The idea of Cause and the idea of Will mutually imply one another. The argument which leads us to look upon God as willing the world's history as well as thinking it may now be exhibited in three stages—

(1) We have the *a priori* conviction—as clear and as strong as our *a priori* conviction that two and two make four and cannot make six—that events cannot happen without a cause, and this idea of Causality implies such a union of power and final Cause as is only found in, and is only intelligible in, a purposeful or a causative intelligence, *i.e.* a Will. This fact by itself, even apart from other metaphysical presuppositions, supplies a strong argument that the ultimate Reality—the ground or source or cause of all that happens—must be a Rational Will.

(2) A quite different line of argument has already led us up to the conviction that the idea of matter without mind is unintelligible, and that the world must be thought of as perpetually existing in and for a universal Mind or Thought. Our analysis of Causality now leads us to think of this Mind as not only thinking, but as causing the objects of his own thought; as Will as well as Thought. For, we have seen, mind is the only thing that can really be a cause at all.

(3) If once we have reason to believe that the ultimate reality is spiritual, analogy would lead us (even apart from the Causality argument) to compare it to mind as we know it. We know nothing whatever of thought

without will. We can form no idea of such a thing. It is as much an abstraction as colour without surface or sensation apart from time. In all our thinking there is attention, and attention is an act of will. In every waking moment of ours we are thinking, willing, feeling. If therefore on any ground we are led to find the origin of things in a thinking Mind, it is reasonable to infer that that Mind is Will as well as Thought.

It may of course be freely admitted that many characteristics of "willing," as it appears in us, cannot possibly be attributed to God. People sometimes, no doubt, mistake the mere sense of effort, which is largely a matter of muscular contraction, or the choice between alternatives of which even the rejected one is felt to be attractive, for the essence of volition. The essence of volition, for our present purpose, is the conscious origination of changes. However much we insist that human attributes must be applied to God *sensu eminentiori*, there is every reason for saying that the concept of will, in this sense, must be an essential element of the best conception which we can form of God. To refuse to include this idea in our conception of God is to refuse to think about Him at all; for the idea of thought without will has simply no meaning whatever for us. The fact that God wills does not, it must be admitted, actually prove *what* He wills, but it will hardly be seriously disputed that if a Universal Thinker be conceived of as willing at all, he must be conceived of as willing all the objects of his thought, *i.e.* the world.

If the position at which we have arrived be accepted, it will almost inevitably carry with it what is, or at least what ought to be, meant by the Personality of God. There are, no doubt, thinkers who will accept the foregoing argument so far as it tends to establish the "self-consciousness" of God, but will hesitate to attribute to Him personality, because personality seems to carry with

it the limitations of human personality. If all that is meant by such scruples is that God cannot be thought of as subject to the same sort of limitations of power and knowledge as human persons, the objection might be met by saying that God must be thought of as super-personal. Indeed, we may say (with Lotze) that the ideal of personality is one which is never fully attained by the human consciousness, and that God is the only being who is in the fullest and completest sense a Person. But the objection to the term person is very likely to spring from an unwillingness to admit any distinction between God and the world. We must therefore say a word as to the relation which the view we have taken contemplates as existing between God and (*a*) the material world or things, (*b*) other spirits.

(*a*) *God's relation to things.*—It has been contended that the world must be thought of as perpetually existing in some sense in the mind of God. So much is common ground for all genuine Idealists. And it may be admitted that the idea of a subject without an object is an impossible one. In that sense we may say with the late Professor T. H. Green, that "the world is as necessary to God as God is to the world"; and in that sense we may, if we please, think of the world as included in the very being of God. By many of the Schoolmen the world as existing in the mind of God was identified with the Logos, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. But the expression, "the world is necessary to God," seems to suggest that the world is as independent of God as the objects of *our* thought are independent of our will. It pictures God as perpetually annexed by some unintelligible fate to a world quite alien to his own inner nature as to some Siamese twin from whom He would perchance, but cannot, part. It may even be contended that such a view really exaggerates the distinctness of

God from the world, and fails to adhere to that Monism, that tendency to reduce the world to a single principle, in the interest of which it is conceived. The only sense in which Theism is concerned to establish such a distinctness is the sense that this world is what it is by reason of the will of God; so much seems implied in the Hegelian formula that God must be thought of as a being who creates the objects of his own thought if only the term "create" be taken seriously enough. Once admit the idea of Will into our conception of God, and there is an end to all danger of any pantheistic identification between God and the world.

(*b*) *The relation between God and other Spirits.*—Whatever may be thought as to the relation of God to time, other spirits at all events have a beginning in time, and the fact of that beginning must have a cause.[1] Now we know that the appearance of conscious life in the world is dependent upon certain material conditions: every stage in the development of such life is conditioned by the development of certain bodily organisms. When once, therefore, it is admitted that the bodily organisms (like other material things) must be thought of as caused by the Will of God, the admission will carry with it the further proposition that the beginning-to-be of the spirits themselves is also due to that Will. And if we once admit a causative relation between the supreme Spirit and the other spirits, we shall avoid all identification between the spirits and God. No doubt there is a resemblance, an identity of nature between God and all other spiritual existence, especially in the higher stages of its development, such as we do not feel to exist between God and any mere object of thought. There is therefore no objection to saying that a human soul

[1] Since Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* the position that the individual self is timeless has ceased to be necessary to philosophic orthodoxy.

is a "spark" or "emanation of the divine," or a "limited mode of the divine self-consciousness," or that "human thought is due to the partial communication to the human soul of the divine thought." Such formulæ are indeed of great value, inasmuch as they assert that there is a real community of nature between the human soul and the divine, and that our knowledge, though imperfect, is real knowledge, real knowledge of the world as it is and as it appears to God, not some mere unreal phantasmagoria arbitrarily devised to amuse us with an unreal appearance of knowledge, as it has been represented to be by some philosophies. But such expressions must not be used to disguise either the causal dependence of the human soul upon the divine will or the distinctness of God from such souls when once they have appeared. And after all such phrases can hardly be regarded as any great improvement upon the old biblical statement that God "created man in his own image and in his own likeness." And the very gist of this likeness is that every human soul exists "for itself," instead of being (like any mere thing) only the object of another's thought. To speak of a spirit which is for itself as being included in or being part of another or identical with another spirit is to deny all that is meant by the assertion that it is a self or a spirit. And if it be admitted that the human spirit has an existence of its own, not identical with the divine, the admission should remove any lingering scruples about the ascription of Personality to God. It may indeed be admitted that God knows all that goes on in our minds in a way which we do not know the thoughts of other minds, that He in some way overcomes that "impenetrability" which is sometimes supposed to be an essential characteristic of Personality; but that does not amount to the really meaningless assertion that God's existence "includes" the existence of

these finite spirits. Such an assertion may have a meaning in the mouths of those to whom God is simply a name for the totality of limited self-consciousnesses together with the world which they know; but it is unintelligible in the mouth of anyone who really believes in God as a self-consciousness which is not *merely* those finite spirits. God may think or feel all that we think or feel; but if He does so, then over and above that feeling or thinking of his, there will remain the thinking or feeling which I call myself. Two spirits thinking or feeling alike will be for ever two and not one. These remarks are not made with any desire to detract from the intimacy of the communion which we may suppose to exist between the divine mind and the human; but communion implies the existence of two spirits, and is destroyed when the union between them passes into identity. To speak of the human heart craving for such a union with God as to destroy personal distinctness is perhaps a natural exaggeration of religious poetry or religious rhetoric, but when it is adopted as a statement of literal fact, Philosophy breaks down the barrier which separates sober thinking from pure Mysticism.

To some minds the admission that God is not the human soul of which nevertheless He is the cause may seem to carry with it the position that God is "limited" or "finite." In that sense of the word "limited" in which the being of anything is said to be limited by being distinct from something else, by not being that other thing, in that sense I should most certainly admit that God is finite inasmuch as He is not man. The Infinite in the sense of some philosophers means simply that which admits of no negative predicate, which is everything and of which we cannot say that there is anything that is not it. But the words "limited" or "finite" in the language of theology or religion usually carry with them the sense

of imperfection or disparagement. God is not limited by his creatures if by that is meant that He is constrained, confined, impeded by something outside Himself, since the appearance and the continued existence of these spirits is due to his will: they spring from his own being. We may, if we like, say that they are still *within* Him inasmuch as they are still the object of his thought, or that their thoughts are fully known to Him; but such language is unnatural and misleading, inasmuch as it almost inevitably suggests the idea *either* that God is no more than they *or* that each finite spirit is *merely* a part of, an effluence from, a fleeting and unsubstantial phase of God. It is a pity that language which naturally suggests such pantheistic developments should often be played with by those who have no real sympathy with them. Even by speaking of God as "the Infinite" theologians have often involved themselves in such non-theistic lines of thought; but the term may be accepted in the sense that there is nothing which exists independently of the will of God: whatever limitation is implied in the existence of other spirits is a self-limitation, not an arbitrary self-limitation but one which necessarily springs from the nature and character of God.

So far our conception of God has been based upon purely metaphysical considerations: we have left out of account the moral considerations. Cardinal Newman has declared that for the existence of God he wants no other argument than the fact of the existence of Conscience. It is perhaps difficult to construct an argument for the existence of God which resolutely makes abstraction of all not purely ethical considerations. The very idea of Morality would, indeed, be unintelligible when taken wholly apart from the other activities of that single Self, of which Conscience is but one aspect or manifestation. But certain it is that the existence of Conscience is among

all the facts of consciousness the one which most imperiously demands the idea of God for its explanation. The existence of Conscience supplies one of the great arguments for supposing *that* God exists: it supplies the sole grounds for saying anything about his character or purposes. We have already seen that even metaphysical arguments for his existence owe something to the Practical Reason; since the merely intellectual understanding of volition was found to involve the idea of *end* or *purpose* or *final cause;* and we should know nothing about final causes but for the consciousness of ourselves as exerting causality with a view to an end which we desire or pronounce good.[1] The judgment that a thing is good, or possesses value, is the judgment of Practical Reason, or what is popularly called Conscience.

But now let us confine ourselves to what may be inferred from the existence of this Practical Reason. It is undeniable that our moral judgments are in themselves quite independent of all theological or metaphysical considerations. When I pronounce that a certain end is intrinsically good, and that therefore this action which tends to bring it about is intrinsically right, my words have a meaning which is intelligible (if it is not *fully* intelligble) apart from all beliefs or disbeliefs as to the ultimate origin, constitution, or destiny of the universe. Such judgments of value may be pronounced, have been pronounced, are constantly being pronounced, and acted upon by people who have no positive belief, or a positive disbelief, in God and a future life. And good men, in proportion to their goodness, will certainly continue to act on such judgments, whatever becomes of their speculative beliefs. But all the

[1] I do not mean that to desire and to pronounce good are the same thing. All desire, when reflected on, suggests the idea of final cause, but that demand of Reason for a final cause is only *fully* satisfied by the desire which the moral consciousness approves.

same it is not difficult to show that that which they mean cannot be fully justified without the assumption that the ultimate Reality is spiritual. When I say "this is good" (*e.g.* this or that person's happiness) I do not mean merely that I happen to like it. It may be something which can only be attained by sacrifice or loss on my part: if that is the case, I feel that I ought to take that step, though it brings me no pleasure. I do not merely mean that the end is one which I should like to be realised. For other people might not like the end or object achieved. Both statements would be true—that I like it and that X does not like it; neither of us would be wrong in his assertion. But that is not what I mean by saying "it is good." My judgment is "objective." I mean that if somebody else judges differently, one or both of us is wrong. This does not imply a claim to personal infallibility on my part; quite the contrary. The very essence of my conviction is that things are right or wrong quite independently of my judging them to be so, quite independently of my likings or dislikings. When I say "happiness is good," or "this particular kind of happiness is good," I mean that anyone who thinks it not good makes a mistake, just as much as when he says that two and two make five. That is what I mean, but, of course, I may be wrong. People may make mistakes in their moral judgments just as they may make mistakes in doing a sum of simple arithmetic. When a man does a sum of addition, and pronounces that the answer is so and so, he does not merely mean "I have made the answer so and so," his judgment claims to be universally true, true objectively, true for all actual or possible intelligences. And when he says "this is right," he equally implies an objective assertion: the essence of his assertion would be gone if he were to suppose that "right" meant simply the course of action which happens to commend itself to him.

Moral truth or falsity then is objective. And yet we know that as a matter of fact our human moral ideas have slowly evolved. We believe that cruelty to animals is wrong; yet there was a time when no human being saw anything wrong in cruelty to animals. And even among educated, civilised, reputedly moral adults, there are grave differences of moral judgment. There are degrees of moral insight just as there are degrees of musical appreciation; and even between the most sensitive consciences there are differences of moral ideal, just as there are some differences of musical taste among the most musical. Every man in making a moral judgment claims universality for it; that is part of his meaning, and yet no one can seriously believe that his particular moral ideal is an absolutely true one, that his moral consciousness is the absolutely flawless mirror of the absolute moral truth. What is morally good always was morally good and always will be so;[1] so much is implied in every moral judgment. But when and where does this absolute rightness exist? What sort of reality has this rightness or intrinsic goodness? The same question may be raised about the laws of physical nature: we saw that it was impossible to think of those laws as having their existence merely in our transitory minds or as properties of a self-existing matter, that the objectivity even of our ordinary judgments about matters of fact implied for their justification the existence of a Universal Mind. But still the Materialists can plausibly explain the physical laws of nature as existing *in* matter. At all events, the objectivity of those laws, their independence of our chance thinkings or likings, forces itself upon us in the most palpable manner. The attempt to "cloy the hungry edge

[1] This does not imply that the same concrete actions are always right, since under different circumstances the true end, in so far as it can be promoted at all, must be promoted by different means.

of appetite by bare imagination of a feast," refutes by its palpable failure the attempt to deny the reality of a physical world independent of us, whatever metaphysical interpretation we may put upon this "independent existence." But what account can we give of this moral "objectivity"? Can it be explained on any but a spiritualistic interpretation of the world? If the ultimate Reality, or source of Reality, be spiritual—if, in short, there be a God—then we can regard his thought and his will, his ultimate purpose, as the reality of which our moral judgments are the more or less inadequate representations. They are true or false in proportion to their conformity to this standard. On any other supposition the "objectivity" which our moral judgments claim remains inexplicable. We might, of course, we should undoubtedly in proportion to the strength of our natural desire for the ends which we pronounce good, continue to guide our own actions by these judgments. But on reflection we should be forced to admit that the only objectivity which we could rationally claim for them would be their conformity to the judgments of other human beings; but at bottom we should have to admit that moral judgments are only the actual ways of thinking about conduct which *de facto* prevail among a race of bipeds who happen to have been evolved during what Mr. Balfour has called a "brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets." It is one of the worst practical results of such an admission that the only objectivity which moral judgments admit of is their conformity to public opinion; and from that there is but a step to the admission that "the man who wants to be more moral than his world is already on the threshold of immorality."[1]

[1] BRADLEY, *Ethical Studies*, p. 180. Of course, if the meaning be merely that his motive should not be the surpassing of his neighbours, the principle would be harmless enough.

Those who have given up belief in a moral Deity can hardly avoid making a god of public opinion. A robust Agnostic conscience, like that of Huxley, which defies a "darkening universe," and opposes his own moral convictions to those of the world, proclaims its profound belief in an objectivity, which really demands Theism for its explanation. Our moral judgments claim to be, in so far as they are true, the law of the universe. They can only be the law of the universe if (with Plato) we find the source of reality and morality in one and the same "idea of the Good," and an idea can have its abode only in a Mind.

The idea of Personality which we ascribe to God is complete when we regard Him as not only a Reason and a Will, but as moral, as objectively good. By this it is not of course meant that his action is limited by our accepted rules of morality. We recognise that in detail our moral rules must be adapted to our nature as human beings; many of them imply the possession of a bodily organism and relations to other such organisms. What is meant is that the ideal life for man must be such as commends itself to the supreme mind—that God pursues ends which possess absolute value, and that our ends, so far as they are the right ends for us, must be in principle identical with the end or ends which have value for God. Philosophies which deny all real distinction between the divine and the human consciousness tend more or less explicitly *either* to deny goodness to God, sometimes constructing a picture of an "Absolute" who is certainly no fitting object of worship for men believing Benevolence to be a virtue, *or* to deny the validity, not merely of our moral judgments in detail, but of our whole moral ideal. They pronounce that acts which in human beings we should call bad are really good, inasmuch as (no less than the acts which we call good) they tend to bring about the end which, being

the end of the universe, must be thought of as essentially good. A glance into the history of thought might reveal the fact that the immoral tendency of all pantheising philosophy has not always been merely speculative. In the political sphere, at all events, the doctrine that "whatever is, is right," has borne the fruit that might have been expected of it.

But it may be objected, "How do you, on your part, reconcile a theory which ascribes the existence of the world to the volition of a perfectly good Deity—and a Deity whose goodness is, in principle, the goodness of our human ideals—with the existence of so much undeserved suffering and so much inevitable moral evil?" The discussion of this great problem would require a separate Essay; but no argument for Theism is likely to have the smallest weight with those who have ever doubted it, which does not, however inadequately, touch upon this, the fundamental difficulty of Theism. Lotze,[1] the one philosopher of our time who is at once a thinker of the very highest rank and wholly and unexceptionably Christian in his thoughts, has confessed that he not only knows no solution of the problem of evil, but that he does not in the least know in what direction to look for one.

To the first of these statements I should be prepared heartily to assent; and if I were compelled to assent to the second, I should (with Lotze) contend that no such difficulties can destroy the validity of the line of arguments, which points to these two conclusions, "the ultimate source of Reality is a rational will," and "the ultimate source of Reality is good." But I do not think we need stop short at the point at which Lotze does stop. The

[1] The *Microcosmus* is easier reading than the *Logic* and *Metaphysic*, but is a very long work. A sufficient idea of Lotze's attitude towards religious questions may be obtained from his short *Philosophy of Religion*. All these works have been translated into English.

line of thought which suggests that God is the cause of all things, and that He is good, will carry us further. If God is good, then the ultimate end of the universe must be good. Anything that appears evil must be really a means to the good. Following this line of thought, it is usual with optimistic thinkers to go on to contend that consequently those means that appear evil are not really evil at all, that evil is but the other side of good, etc.—and herewith the whole of the paralysing Pantheism to which I have already alluded. But to assert that that which my moral judgment condemns as evil is really very good, is to condemn myself to utter scepticism. I am just as certain that pain and sin are not good as I am of the first principles of reasoning. Compel me to doubt the first, and I must doubt the second; and if I doubt that, I have no longer any reason for affirming or denying anything at all. The end must justify the means certainly, but that does not prevent the means from being bad. A surgical operation is certainly justified so long as the end cannot be attained without the means; but the pain remains an evil. The same end without that pain would be still better than the end with that means. No matter what the goodness of the end which is being realised by this universe of ours, the pain and the evil in it can never become good. A being who is compelled to attain his ends by the use of means which are bad must in a sense be regarded as limited. And this limitation has generally been admitted by reasonable theologians. Bishop Butler, for instance, admits that there may be things which are intrinsically as impossible as for God to change the past. The same limitation in principle is really implied by the explanation of evil as the work of a personal devil, however groundless such a belief may be, and however little it really gets rid of the difficulty. It is perhaps not so much from the theologians as from the

philosophers that objections are likely to come. Directly we admit that God is limited by an essential nature of things (it will be urged), we are really giving up our theistic view of the universe. God ceases to be the ultimate source of reality; He becomes merely a part of reality, and we have abandoned the monistic idealism which we profess to have accepted.

Now it is not impossible to combine a sincere Theism with the admission that God is not all and did not make all. The old Greek philosophers admitted a ὕλη, which was not created by God, though it could be—partially and imperfectly—controlled by God, and made subservient to his ends. And Dr. Martineau seems inclined to adopt a somewhat similar view. To Origen and to the modern Pluralists souls are without beginning and coeternal with God. Now I do not myself feel disposed to take refuge in such a view, much as it has to say for itself. The pre-existence of souls seems to me a gratuitous hypothesis, opposed to all the probabilities and analogies which our experience suggests. On the other hand, the pre-existence of matter seems alike inconsistent with the modern science which declines to distinguish matter from its laws and with an idealistic metaphysic which compels us to reject the idea of a matter with a nature of its own independent of the knowing subject. And it is not necessary, because we think of God as limited, to think of Him as limited by anything outside Himself. The limitation springs from his own nature. All the theories by which philosophers and theologians have sought to reconcile the facts of the world's history with the perfect goodness of God really involve a certain limitation of power. That is the conclusion to which the actual existence of moral evil, when taken in connexion with the condemnation of it by the moral consciousness, seems to point. There is a sense in which God is finite. He

is finite, not in the sense of being limited by some external law or blind overruling fate, by some thing or some person outside Himself, but in the sense in which every thing that is real is limited. It is difficult to see what the negation of this last proposition would really mean. Space is infinite, because space is not a thing; it is not real; it is mere "form," a system of intellectual relations in which all real things must find a place, but not real in itself. The real is necessarily finite. We may nevertheless think of God as infinite, inasmuch as He is not limited by anything outside Himself, inasmuch as everything that is springs from his perfectly righteous will and thought. When theologians have interpreted infinitude as meaning more than this, they have usually fallen into that pantheistic optimism which ends by destroying those moral convictions upon which all theology rests. God is infinite because He is the ground of all that is; He is Omnipotent because He is the cause of all that is; He is infinitely good because He wills the best that He has it in Him to produce. Such a deity will be described by some as "anthropomorphic." I am content that it should be so. Some of us will prefer an anthropomorphic Deity to the God who is only matter disguised or a mere intellectual abstraction or a magnified devil. An anthropomorphic Deity in this sense, I venture to contend, is the only Deity who satisfies the demands of our rational and our moral nature. It is only by the analogy of our own consciousness that we can form a conception of "Spirit" at all, and if there be any truth in idealism, God is Spirit.

Such is the conception of God to which we are, as it seems, led by the use of our Reason. It would take me too long to enter upon a formal argument to show that this conception of God is also that which is set before us by Christianity, or (to be more definite) by the religious teaching of Jesus Christ and by the religious consciousness

which is revealed in that teaching. I simply put it to my readers that these two conceptions are the same. And this is what we might naturally expect if the teaching and the personality of Christ are to be regarded as constituting in any sense a divine revelation. For our Lord Himself always appealed to the intrinsic reasonableness of what He said as the proof and confirmation of the truth of his doctrine. Because Reason is capable of assenting to the truth of religious teaching when once it is set before it, it does not follow that Reason, or rather *my* Reason, could have attained to the knowledge by its own unassisted efforts. And yet this opposition between unassisted and assisted Reason is really opposed to the principle which finds in Christ the highest manifestation under human limitations of the Divine Thought. It was in Christ that the human Reason first attained with complete self-consciousness to that view of the divine nature which in a purely formal way we have attempted to establish on metaphysical and rational grounds. I say "in a purely formal way," because all that we have hitherto said about God's nature is that it is to be conceived of as "mind" and as "good." The content which we give to that idea will depend upon the concrete standard which we adopt as our ideal of life; and it was because in Jesus Christ the moral as well as the religious consciousness of man is felt to have attained its highest development that Christians are able, without any surrender of the claims of Reason or of Conscience, to regard the teaching, the life, and the character of Christ as constituting a "Revelation of God."

To discuss the nature of Christ's teaching or of his Personality or the meaning of "revelation" does not form a part of our present aim. Still less is it possible to ask in detail how far the dogmatic teaching of the Church about the nature of God and his revelation in

Christ can be accepted consistently with the philosophical position to which we have been led. All that I can attempt is to point out very briefly how the Theism for which I have contended supplies a basis for a rational interpretation of Christian doctrine.

(1) The view of the divine nature to which we have been led is one which is essentially in harmony with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is essentially a philosophical doctrine—a doctrine based upon data supplied by Christ's own conception of God and his relation to Him—but still undeniably a metaphysical doctrine; and not the actual, explicit teaching of Christ. It had a slow growth and a long development; it cannot be contended that it has at all times meant the same thing. But I take the doctrine as it is presented to us in the fully developed scholastic teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. We are there told that the "tres Personæ" are "tres proprietates"—three essential and eternally distinct attributes, as we might paraphrase the term. God is essentially Power, Wisdom, and Will; or (since the divine Will is always a will for good) the Third Person of the Holy Trinity may be equally described as "Goodness" or "Love." Is not this precisely the view of God's nature to which we have been led on purely rational grounds—that He is the Union of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, the will for the good springing from the union of Power with Wisdom? We shall also be prepared to accept that scholastic doctrine, here still more closely treading in the steps of the Platonising Fathers, which sees in the Logos or Sapientia Dei the whole world as eternally present in idea in the Divine Mind, in Creation the gradual unfolding of that idea. Even inanimate nature is part of the thought of God; He is still more fully revealed in the life of souls—with increasing fulness as animal life passes into the intellectual,

moral, and religious life of humanity. He is revealed in a pre-eminent degree by the teachers and the prophets who have taught the highest ideals of life and the worthiest views of the divine nature. And for those to whom the history of the world is really the work of a divine Will, not the blind process of necessary development in which the later stages are simply the products of the earlier stages, there is no reason why that divine Wisdom, who is God Himself, should not be regarded as pre-eminently manifesting Himself once for all, uniquely, in one historical personality. The personal view of God's nature prepares the way for the idea of a personal revelation.

(2) The rationality of the idea of an Incarnation depends upon the view which is formed of the divine nature and of the human. The view we have taken of the divine nature is that human nature is the same in principle with the divine. "God created man in his own image." Every human soul is an emanation from the divine, a reproduction of the divine. But not all souls represent the divine in equal measure. All who accept the idea of a God who is good must admit that the better the soul and the more profound its spiritual insight, the more fully that soul can be regarded as representing or revealing God. If an actual historical person is actually pronounced by the moral and the religious consciousness to embody the highest ideal of human life and of the true relation between God and man, such a person may be regarded on this ground alone as in a unique sense a revelation of God.

By some it will probably be thought that this view of the Incarnation would be more in harmony with that view of the relation between God and man which actually includes the consciousness of man in God, which denies all real independence to the human consciousness, and

makes every man simply a phase of the divine Being. Such a view is, as I have ventured to contend, fatal to a really ethical view of God. However little such a consequence may be acknowledged, such a view must necessarily tend either to transferring to God the badness of the bad soul or else in denying that the bad soul is really bad. The moral and the religious consciousness equally demand that the human soul shall be regarded as a distinct person, the human will as a distinct will from God's. The divine Wisdom may be regarded as present in the individual, illuminating his understanding, inspiring his will—more or less, in proportion to the actual conformity between his will and character and the divine Ideal. Similarly, when we turn to the Christian doctrine of the Person of Christ, the idea of an Incarnation loses all its value when either (*a*) the divine Logos is thought of as supplanting and taking the place of the human will and understanding, as is virtually done by many popular views of the Incarnation which have a strong tendency to Apollinarianism, or (*b*) the divine Logos is thought of as equally present to all human souls, or therefore as not present in any exceptional sense in the Person of Christ. Without laying much stress upon the technical refinements of the later Catholic Christology, we may recognise in it a general conformity with the demands of a philosophy based on the "primacy of the practical Reason," inasmuch as it recognises that (1) the divine Logos, present in all souls to some extent and in some degree, was pre-eminently present in the human soul of Christ, and (2) that, however great the coincidence between the moral and religious ideals, between the will, the character of the human Jesus and of the God who was revealing Himself in and through Him, there remain two natures, two wills, two natures, not one.

How far the historical facts enable us to attribute such

a position to the historical Christ will be considered in more than one of the following essays. Meanwhile I merely add that it is essential to such a view of the Incarnation as has been inadequately suggested in these few sentences that there shall be no claim for infallible or unlimited knowledge of matters of fact on the part of the man Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the limitation of Christ's human knowledge, now so widely known and accepted through the influence of Bishop Gore, is the necessary presupposition of any view of the Incarnation which can claim to be regarded as philosophical. It may be that our view of this limitation may have to be carried somewhat further than would commend itself to many of those who have been most prominently associated with the doctrine. But it is not my object here to develope a view of Incarnation, but to leave room for one.

(3) A word must be said as to the bearing of Theism of the kind here advocated upon the question of Miracles. Apart from experience there is, so far as I see, no reason why it should be assumed that the course of nature should be uniform. By those who think of God as a Will, the idea of a "miracle," in the sense of an exception to the uniformities commonly prevailing among phænomena, ought not to be pronounced an *a priori* inconceivability. There is, indeed, no difficulty about reconciling the "uniformity of nature" with a miracle, even in the common acceptance of the term, if we are prepared to admit that the will of God or of some other "supernatural being" may be included in that "sum of conditions" which, from the scientific point of view, is regarded as the cause of the phænomenon. A rational Deity must be thought of as guiding his action upon some intelligible and universal principle, and this principle may be regarded as a "higher law," under which both the ordinary course of nature and the exceptional event may be brought.

But this is to use the word "law" in a very different sense from that in which the term is employed in science. Such exceptional events would have to be thought of as violations of what is ordinarily meant by the uniformity of nature — of uniformity in that sense which is presupposed by all ordinary scientific reasoning. We might indeed hold that under similar "conditions" the phænomenon would occur again, *i.e.* when the purpose served by the exceptional event could again be served by its repetition; but this inclusion of "final causes" among the "conditions" of a phænomenon violates all the assumptions upon which ordinary scientific reasoning is based.[1] There would be an end to the possibility of scientific prediction were we to suppose that the question whether a saint's finger will be chopped off by a machine depends not upon the momentum of the instrument at the moment before the introduction of the finger, but upon the spiritual advantages to be secured by the saving of the finger. I hold, therefore, that a miracle, in the common acceptation of the term, would be really a violation of what is commonly meant by the uniformity of nature, though it would not be a violation of the law of causality. Every event must have a cause, but the cause need not be one that works uniformly.[2] A violation of the uniformity of nature in the sense explained I do not regard as *a priori* inconceivable. The objection to such a view is that all our

[1] How far it is possible to explain biological phænomena without the conception of "final cause" is a question on which I will not venture to express an opinion.

[2] "But why so confidently assume, we might reply, that a rigid and monotonous uniformity is the only, or the highest, indication of order, the order of an everliving Spirit above all? How is it that we depreciate machine-made articles, and prefer those in which the artistic impulse, or the fitness of the individual case, is free to shape and to make what is literally manufactured, hand-made? . . . Dangerous as teleological arguments in general may be, we may at least safely say the world was not designed to make science easy . . . To call the verses of a poet, the politics of a statesman, or the award of a judge mechanical, implies, as Lotze has pointed out,

experience of the actual course of events goes to show that the ultimate cause does not work after this fashion, but in accordance with general or uniform laws; so that if all the observable conditions of a phænomenon are correctly observed, the recurrence of the conditions may be expected to bring with it the recurrence of the phænomenon.

Our knowledge of nature not being complete, we cannot pronounce it inconceivable that there should be exceptions to this procedure; but the probabilities against such exceptions are enormous. In this as in other cases, probable reasoning is based upon imperfect knowledge of causes. Moreover, though the objection to the acceptance of a miracle in the sense defined must be regarded as springing from experience, the experience is so uniform in character as to suggest, though not to prove, that there must be some reason in the nature of things why such an event should be impossible. At all events, to admit in practice the possibility of such an event is to destroy the canons upon which not only our ordinary reasoning about matters of science, but in particular our ordinary canons of historical criticism, are based. Postulates cannot be proved; but when they are denied, we have no longer a basis for argument. Sincere Theists will, indeed, continue to hold that it is not inconceivable that God should have governed the world otherwise than in accordance with general laws (*i.e.* laws of uniform sequence), but, as He does not appear to do so, there must be some good reason why He does not. We must suppose that it is better that the world should be governed

marked disparagement, although it implies, too, precisely those characteristics —exactness and invariability—in which Maxwell would have us see a token of the Divine."—Dr. JAMES WARD, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, i. pp. 108-9. I should hardly have ventured to put forth so slight a suggestion of so unfashionable a view of Causality, but that I am now able to refer the reader who may find it unsatisfying to this brilliant work.

by general laws. It is not *a priori* inconceivable that in the whole course of history there should be one single exception to such a uniform mode of action, but it may well be thought morally inconceivable that any spiritually important consequences should be dependent on the belief in an historical event which would be so utterly incapable of establishment by testimony as a supposed solitary exception to an otherwise uniform course of nature.

But are what are commonly called miracles inconsistent with the laws of nature? Does this general principle—that natural laws are not "suspended"—necessarily involve the negation of any alleged historical event for which we cannot account consistently with the uniformity of nature? It may be contended, indeed, that our knowledge of nature is never so perfect as to enable us to exclude the supposition of the interference with the ordinary course of events (as it appears to ordinary observation) by a hitherto unsuspected law; but practically it may be said that there are many cases in which our knowledge is really sufficient to exclude the admissibility of such an event, if we do not wish to plunge ourselves into a scepticism which would make historical research and practical life alike impossible. The actual suspension of the earth's motion or the occurrence of any phænomenon which would produce an apparent "stopping of the sun" may be said to belong to this class. And I think it can hardly be doubted that if this principle of criticism be adopted, its application cannot be regarded as stopping with the Old Testament. The rising of the saints out of the tomb with their bodies, and some of what are called the "nature-miracles," may surely with tolerable confidence be placed in this class. But we must very narrowly limit the area in which it is reasonable to exclude the possibility that extraordinary, and to us unaccountable, events may have occurred. When we come

to the operations of mind, it is questionable how far we can apply the idea of "law" in its ordinary sense at all; since no mental phænomenon can be regarded as caused by antecedent phænomena *in the sense in which one physical event causes another physical event,* since the mind is not *merely* a succession of psychical phænomena.[1] And it can hardly be denied that our knowledge of the limits which are set by natural law to the control capable of being exercised by mind on the phænomena of organic nature, and still more by mind upon mind, is extremely imperfect. We do know something of those limits. To suppose that the most exceptionally endowed human soul could have stopped the motion of the sun would be, as I have contended, to reject the assumptions upon which all historical research and all scientific reasoning proceed. But to suppose that some diseases can be healed by mental means, that some persons possess more power than others of such healing—this is not opposed to, but in conformity with what we know of the action of mind upon the physical organism; nor can our present knowledge be held to exclude the belief that one person may have had a power unparalleled in history of effecting such cures.

It may, indeed, be doubted whether the ordinary action of the human will (putting aside altogether the hypothesis of free will in the ordinary indeterminist sense) can be brought within the common conception of the uniformity of nature. At some point or other, if the self is really a cause (however little we may be able to say where such interference begins), every voluntary act—every case where a physical event is determined by an idea—there must be an interference with the course of nature, *as it would*

[1] I here use the word "caused" in the sense of Physical Science and common life. I have contended above that this uniformity of succession is not really a case of causation.

be without the action of soul or mind. Every such act does in a sense "violate the laws of nature." But then experience teaches us the limits of such violation. We know by experience that some muscles are subject to voluntary control, and others are not. We know that, while voluntary action does alter the direction of physical forces, it never suspends the law of gravity or the conservation of energy.[1] These experiences of the normal limits to the power of voluntary, *i.e.* mental, action enable us to formulate general rules which are reasonably treated as themselves laws of nature. But as to what these limits are we are dependent entirely upon experience. And in some cases these limits cannot at present be said to be fixed beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt. I have myself a strong conviction that the result of "psychical research" has already to some extent brought, and may hereafter be to a still greater extent able to bring, recorded events which rationalistic criticism has commonly dismissed as impossible within the limits of what may be regarded as possible without any further violation of the laws of nature than is implied in the normal action of the human will. But there is no probability that it will ever reverse the verdict which historical criticism and the study of comparative religion have passed on some other events recorded in the Old and New Testaments.[2]

To apply this principle to the criticism of the Gospel narratives forms no part of my present purpose. I will conclude with suggesting these principles as philosophical canons on the subject—

(*a*) The idea of a suspension of natural law is not *a priori* inadmissible.

(*b*) At the same time, since such an admission would

[1] In so far as we are justified in assuming it at all. But cf. WARD, *op. cit.*, I. p. 214 *sq.*, II. pp. 36 *sq.*, 77 *sq.*

[2] There are some interesting remarks on this subject by the late Mr. Frederick Myers in his review of Renan in *Modern Essays.*

destroy all the criteria both of scientific and historical reasoning, the admission of such a suspension could not reasonably be accepted without an amount of evidence which is practically unattainable in reference to the events of the distant past.

(*c*) The rejection of miracles in the popular sense (*i.e.* suspension of natural law) is not incompatible with the recognition of exceptional degrees of control over the forces of physical nature by individual mind and will.

(*d*) Our faith in the Incarnation must rest primarily on other grounds than alleged miracles, and must be of a kind which does not *demand* the occurrence of physical miracles. At the same time faith in such an Incarnation may be reasonably strengthened by the records of such an exceptional manifestation of the forces of personality if the historical testimony is sufficient.

(*e*) The probability of an alleged event of this nature must depend partly upon the amount of historical testimony in its favour, partly upon the extent of the analogy between it and other events for which we believe ourselves to have sufficient evidence. While in the present state of opinion it is extremely unwise to base any article of religious belief upon the acceptance of disputed "psychical phænomena," it may fairly be said that the results of recent investigation have been very considerably to widen our view of the possibilities of such personal influences.

It forms no part of my task, as I have said, to apply these considerations to the criticism of the Gospel narratives, but I will allow myself one concluding remark to prevent misunderstanding on the one hand or on the other. I believe that it will be found that a sober, historical criticism, based upon the principles here suggested, will leave us in a modified form the beliefs about Christ's Person which are most cherished among ordinary Christians—notably (1) the general fact that much of his time

was spent in the healing of physical disease by means of extraordinary spiritual capacities; (2) that after his death there occurred to his disciples visions of Himself which were not mere subjective delusions, and which confirm—for them and for us—the fact of his continued life and love for his followers. Belief in miracles, in the sense which is here in question, may not be wholly without spiritual value even now. But we may be quite confident that for minds which have once appreciated the principles of historical criticism, or minds affected by the diffused scepticism which has sprung from historical criticism, neither religious faith in general, nor any doctrine of primary religious importance, will ever depend mainly upon the evidence of abnormal events recorded to have happened in the remote past. Criticism must be wholly free; though when it is seen that faith is independent of miracles, it may become less destructive on one side and less desperately apologetic on the other. Belief in God will rest in the long run upon the instinctive rejection of materialism by the commonsense of mankind, confirmed by the reflective analysis of the philosopher. Belief in His goodness will rest upon the testimony of the moral consciousness. For minds which dare not explain away or minimize the presence of evil in human life, belief in Immortality will be a corollary of that goodness. Belief in Christ as the supreme, unique Revealer of God will rest upon the testimony of the same moral consciousness, recognising and welcoming its own ideal in Him. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost." "He that is of the light cometh to the light."

II.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

By W. R. INGE

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We are practically obliged to form our ideas of God from the highest principle in our own nature, and so to assume that *Mind* or *Reason* is the ruling principle of the universe 61

The human spirit as it ought to be is, for us, the World-Spirit in little, and the whole cosmic process is a phase of His life, as our earthly lives are a phase of our life as immortal spirits . . . 63

The expression of the Divine nature (so far as possible) under the forms of space and time is the main object of creation, and humanity is the chief instrument by which this scheme is being realised on our planet 64

The Incarnation of the Word of God is thus not only an event in the past, but the ideal which humanity is striving to realise . . *id.*

Christ did not *begin* to be the light of the world at the Incarnation, but "He was in the world" from the first 65

The moral preparation for the Incarnation was mainly entrusted to the Hebrews, the intellectual to the Greeks, and the political to the Romans 66

Adumbrations of the Incarnation in the Old Testament . . . *id.*

Greek and Eastern myths point to a widespread recognition that only a God-Man can redeem humanity . . . . . *id.*

Growth of the Logos-idea in philosophy. Thales, Heraclitus, Plato, and the Stoics progressively developed it 67

The Greek and Jewish philosophies of religion were fused at Alexandria in the system of Philo, whose Logos-doctrine anticipates St. John to a striking extent 68

The Logos of Philo is a cosmical principle identical with the "intelligible world" of the Platonists. But Philo leaves no room for an Incarnation, which is the centre of the Christian revelation . . *id.*

Though the Christian Church did not at first apprehend all the truth about Christ's Person, the claim of her theologians to be merely interpreting the original revelation is fully justified . . 69

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The main object of the controversies was to arrive at a clear understanding of the concepts "God" and "Man," and the relations between them. The problems were at bottom psychological . . 70

The Greek Church worshipped Christ mainly as Prophet, the Roman as King, the Reformed Churches as Priest 71

In the Middle Ages the Divine predominated too much over the human. In the first two centuries after the Reformation the opposite error prevailed. Modern philosophy may claim to have brought back Christology to its true path . . . . . *id.*

Some early steps in the evolution of doctrine may be mentioned as still instructive 72

The theories of *Adoption* into Sonship and of the Incarnation as a mere *appearance* (Docetism) were both rebutted by the Johannine *Logos-theology*, which combines belief in the Logos-Christ as the World-Principle with belief in a real Incarnation . . . *id.*

This theology received a further development at the hands of Alexandrian Platonism, which however did not quite solve the problem of the Person of Christ 73

Much less could *Arianism* contribute anything of value . . . 74

Disputes about the "Nature" and "Person" of Christ. There was great confusion in the terminology 75

The Church probably decided rightly in rejecting *Monophysitism*; but the monophysite "Dionysius" and the mystics preserved a side of the truth which was in danger of being lost . . . . *id.*

Dionysian mysticism, however, aimed at dispensing at last with the Divine-Human Mediator. Fallacy of this aspiration . . . 77

German mysticism rested mainly on the Incarnation, interpreted as a law of the spiritual life 80

Reaction against this type of theology after the Reformation. Deistic modes of thought were prevalent, and made a consistent Christology impossible 81

The problem is how to conceive of the Godhead and Manhood as not mutually exclusive terms, while yet neither is allowed to curtail the other. Christianity asserts, without explaining, the fact of the *unio mystica*, which is the ideal consummation of the religious life . . *id.*

But we must not forget that dogmatic theology consists largely of historical propositions. What is the place of dogma in religious life and thought? 83

Religious life moves normally in an atmosphere neither of pure thought nor of conscious myth; it seeks symbols which shall be vitally connected with the things symbolised . . . 84

It cannot be denied that religious symbols are sometimes manufactured in good faith and believed as historical truths . . . 85

But the vitality of belief in this mode of revelation is a hard fact, and the connexion of ideas which it proves must be accounted for . 86

There are signs that the doctrines about the Person of Christ are losing some of their power as religious symbols. Why is this? . . 87

The long-standing secularisation of dogma by using it as the test of Church membership is one cause; another is the conflict between science and tradition on the question of miracles . . . *id.*

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There is at present no consensus of opinion as to whether miracles are to be expected as part of a Divine revelation, or not. Both views are philosophically tenable, and neither is inconsistent with, full belief in the Divinity of Christ 89

History as history is not the business of religion, which always speaks in the present tense. The truth which the miracles are intended to support is that there was an unique Divine Incarnation in the Person of Jesus Christ 90

Is this certain? The hypothesis of a *diffused* revelation, which found its focus in the idealised Christ, cannot be absolutely disproved by historical evidence. But the testimony of the Christian consciousness strongly supports the traditional belief 91

Is this belief still an integral part of Christianity? It is; for (1) If Christ did not claim to be the Son of God in an unique sense, the Gospels are too untrustworthy to build anything upon them; (2) there is one Divine attribute—sinlessness—which Christianity can never surrender; (3) the voluntary humiliation of the Lord of all is an integral doctrine; (4) the most distinctive parts of His teaching are bound up with the personal claim . . . 95

"But," it may be objected, "the life of an individual is an impossible form for a Divine Incarnation." The answer is (1) Christ never claimed to be the Absolute; (2) the moral qualities which require a personal life are higher and more Divine than omnipresence and omnipotence. In the love of Christ we are right to find "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" 99

Another objection, often raised by evolutionists, is that the perfect man could not have been born 2,000 years ago. But (1) several arts culminated long ago; (2) the Incarnation was not catastrophic, but was long prepared for; (3) Christianity is itself a principle of growth; it marked the beginning of a new era, and did not preclude further progress. The office of the Holy Spirit is to exhibit a Christophany in humanity itself 101

Those who try to follow Christ without believing in His Divinity have an austere and difficult religion, but not an ignoble one. Their Christianity is mutilated, but they are not infidels. In many cases their mistake arises from attributing too much importance to historical testimony, and too little to religious experience . . . 102

DURING a philosophical discussion not long ago one of the speakers observed, "I could not worship what is part of myself," to which the other replied, "And I could not worship what is *not* part of myself." The contradiction exhibits in epigrammatic form one of those insoluble but fruitful antinomies which meet us whenever we try to penetrate to the reality of things. They are insoluble, because they are rooted in the psychological

conditions of our life here; they are fruitful, because they help us to understand those conditions. A human being knows himself to be one person, and yet he may describe himself with equal truth as a little lower than the angels and as a little higher than the brutes. We can partly apprehend and attach ourselves to ideas which belong to a higher order than space and time, and yet our whole existence is dependent on the most accidental and fugitive physical conditions. How, then, are we to interpret our human personality? In terms of what it sprang from, or in terms of what we picture to ourselves as its ideal consummation? Or in neither of these ways, but as a process which has no existence except in its evolving states? We know that we are not what we would be; we think that we are not what we should be: is this a reason for believing that we are, or will be, other than we now appear? And how are we to interpret the world, which is external to us, and yet not external, since our images of it only come to us through our senses? It is a world which is evidently governed by fixed laws, laws which are perhaps more real than anything else that touches us; but yet these laws are only known to us as operative in particular instances, in events which happen and cease to be; and how does that which was and is not differ from that which never was? Moreover, these laws seem to us to be partly moral and partly unmoral: what do they reveal to us about the ruling principle of the universe? Are we justified in assuming that it is the same or analogous to that which we feel to be the master-principle of human life—to that inner light or higher reason which guides us so far as we follow our true nature? If we assume this, we are declaring that "the mind of man is the throne of the Godhead," as was said long ago. Then we have to face the charge that we are making our God in our own

image. We are reminded that the gods of the negroes have black faces; we recall the scoff of Xenophanes, that oxen or lions would certainly worship a great ox or a great lion, and that of Spinoza, that if a triangle could make a creed, he would assert that God is "eminently triangular." But if we are not to worship the ideal man, what are we to worship? Impersonal law, or blind mechanism, does not include the noblest part of the universe; it does not include us, the worshippers. And the unknowable God, the Absolute, the Monad, must for ever escape us. We hold forth our hands to infinity, and grasp only zero. Neither pure thought nor pure science can provide us with an object of worship. If there is no uniting principle, the two must remain for ever sundered, and all hope of bringing our lives into rational order must be abandoned.

Reasonable beings cannot really believe in an irrational world; and so the general sense of mankind, in the higher races at least, has decided that we *must* assume Mind or Reason to be the ruling principle of the universe. The human spirit as it ought to be is the World-Spirit in little. What is good and evil to us is good and evil to Him. The cosmic process is a moment or phase of His life, even as our lives here are a moment or phase of our existence as eternal spirits. The laws under which we live are His laws, in that He brought the world into being; they are the laws to which He subjects Himself, in that He is living a life in the life of the universe. The operation of these laws has and must have a negative as well as a positive aspect—as resistance and not only as energy. Under this aspect they appear as obstacles which retard the consummation of the Divine plan, and therefore as evil. Without them the moral energy of the universe would destroy the conditions of its own existence by completing its work

in a moment. For us, however, salvation and happiness consist in identifying ourselves with the work of the Word of God in the world, and not with the forces, whatever they may be, which impede and resist it. Our true life, like His, is all good. We are privileged to be the chief instruments by which He carries out His purposes on this planet; or, at any rate, we are the instruments by which He purposes to achieve on this planet one great scheme—the expression of the Divine Nature, so far as is possible, under the forms of space and time. What theology calls the Incarnation—*i.e.* not the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but the taking of the manhood into God—is, so far as we are concerned, the supreme object of creation. Taking as our guide the unique historical Incarnation in the past, we may say that the complete revelation to man of God's purposes concerning man, and the complete subordination of the human will to the Divine Will, so that it may act unswervingly in carrying out those purposes, are what constitutes union between the human and Divine natures, and that the realisation of this union in mankind, as it was once realised in Christ, is the far-off Divine event towards which the whole creation moves. The Incarnation of the Word of God is not only an event in the past; it is the ideal which the world at large is striving to realise, and which is also, in a sense, the meaning of salvation for each one of us. It is the great "ought-to-be"—that supreme category of the mind, which instinctively postulates the complement of what is only given in part; that hope to which faith gives substance, and of which faith speaks, with equal propriety, now in the present and now in the future tense.

Both as individuals and as members of the human family, we stand in the middle of a process of enlightenment or education. We are or should be learning more

and more on these high matters as we grow older; but we can anticipate neither the lessons of old age nor those which are reserved for the riper maturity of humanity. We can, however, learn something by looking back and tracing the gradual revelation of the Eternal Word. He was in the world, as St. John says, from the beginning. Not only in the secret counsels of God was the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world"; not only were we "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world"; but in the events of history we are taught to recognise His presence; even as St. Paul says that He was the Rock that followed the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness. Nor must we suppose that it was only the chosen people whom He visited and taught. The Christian Apologists of the second century were not afraid to admit that those Greeks who, like Heraclitus and Socrates, lived in harmony with the Divine Logos, were Christians before Christ. There is an old English verse which expresses the same idea :—

> "Many man for Cristes love
> Was martired in Romayne,
> Er any Cristendom was knowe there,
> Or any cros honoured."

These and similar statements, which rather surprise us by their generous recognition of Pagan virtue, should be accepted by us without qualification. They furnish an answer to a difficulty which has often been felt about the Catholic Church; namely, that it manifestly absorbed many elements which were Pagan, that is to say non-Jewish, in their origin. If we may trace the "mind of Christ" as already influencing the philosophy of Heraclitus and Socrates (to mention the two names given by Justin[1]), and the purer and more elevated rites of Greek worship, we shall not be troubled at the transit of Christianity from

[1] *Apol.*, i. 46.

"a world of Syrian peasants" to "a world of Greek philosophers. [1]

The moral preparation for Christ seems to have been mainly committed to the Hebrews, the intellectual to the Greeks, and the political to the Romans. The Hebrews learned very early, and never forgot, the two most important maxims of moral education—to reverence God, and to reverence their own bodies. Their religion, alone among the primitive religions of the world, remained free from degrading myths and untainted by any association with sensuality. The insurmountable barrier which they placed between God and man saved them from these ruinous errors, and also barred the way to those over-facile reconciliations which only retard the true solution. Anticipations of the Incarnation doctrine are visible in the prophetic visions of an ideal representative of the nation, in the wisdom-literature, with its personifications of the Wisdom, the Word, the Power, or the Glory of Jehovah, and in the hopes of a coming Messiah. Moreover, their priestly and sacrificial system, as we can now see, pointed forward to the only sacrifice which can really atone God and man—namely, the self-oblation of a Divine-Human Mediator, who, as representative of the race, can offer not merely Himself for us, but us in and with Himself.

Meanwhile the Greeks were working out their part of the problem in a different and not less characteristic way. Their sense of estrangement from God was less deep than that of the Hebrews, and therefore their ideas of reconciliation were shallow and inadequate. Deification for them was an easy process, so easy that their demigods could not be redeemers. And yet their legends of Heracles, the son of the father of the gods and a human mother, who when on earth went about righting wrongs, and after labouring and suffering for mankind ascended

[1] HATCH, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 1.

to heaven from the pyre on Oeta; and of Prometheus, who was crucified for revealing to mankind the arts and sciences which dignify and bless their lives, suggest a parallel which is too obvious to need exposition. Parenthetically we may add that other mythologies have adumbrated the same truths. In India the Brahmans could point to the various *avatars* of Vishnu, in which they beheld not mere theophanies, but "the presence, at once mystical and real, of the Supreme Being in a human individual, who is at once and the same time true God and true man; and this intimate union of the two natures is represented as continuing after the death of the individual in whom it took place."[1] The Persians also looked for a coming Saviour, who was to be born of a virgin mother, conceived by the holy spirit of Zarathustra three thousand years after the revelation of that prophet. So deeply rooted in the human breast is the instinct that none can bring to man the salvation which he needs, except one who is both God and Man. But the main contribution of the Greeks was conveyed not through mythology, but through philosophy. From the early dawn of speculation in Thales, who taught that "Intelligence (Νοῦς) is the God of the world, which is animated throughout and full of deity," we find a recognition that the inner light, Reason in its highest meaning, is not only the gift of God, but His actual presence. Heraclitus speaks of it as "common" to all alike, the light that lighteth every man, and laments that "the majority" wilfully follow their own devices instead of obeying it. The Divine Logos is breathed into us, he says: it is Reason, Destiny, and Justice at once, the instrument of creation, and the swiftest and subtlest of all spirits. Plato, and still more the Stoics, further develop the doctrine of the Logos, as the ruling principle both in the universe and in the human soul,

[1] BARTH, *Religions of India*, p. 170.

and as the bond of union between God and man. St. Augustine was able to find very much of Christian theology in the somewhat eclectic Platonism of his day; only "the Word made flesh—that found I not among them."

The course of history brought it about that a fusion between the Greek and Jewish philosophies of religion took place at the point where Greek and Jew came most in contact with each other, namely, at Alexandria. The "Word" or "Words" of God were easily identified with the Stoical "Logoi" or the Platonic "Ideas." In the Alexandrian Jew Philo we have a Logos-doctrine which, though defective from the Christian point of view, anticipates St. John to a very striking extent. He follows the Greeks in taking the notion of *Being* as his starting-point, and defines God as "the really existing." But though he will not (like the Platonists) call God superessential, he insists that He is "without qualities," and unapproachable in the absolute "simplicity" of His nature. Such a Being can enter into no direct relations with the world; and Philo accordingly postulates "a second God, who is His Word," and who is the real Creator of the universe. This "second God" he identifies with the intelligible world, the archetypal universe, of the Platonists, and calls the Logos "the idea of ideas," while the phenomenal world is figuratively described as "the younger Son of God." The Logos of Philo is thus not only the Agent in Creation, but is Himself a cosmical principle, the archetype and real life of the universe. With the human spirit the Logos has the closest relations, operating in man as the higher reason. And yet Philo's Logos is not an hypostasis of the Deity. He is not personal, and may equally well be spoken of in the plural number. He is not so much the "Word" as the "Mind and Will"[1] of God, and may be identified with Plato's "Mind" (Νοῦς).

[1] Platonism makes no distinction between Reason and Will.

An incarnation of such a being is unthinkable,[1] and Philo never attempts to connect him with the Messianic hopes of his people. And thus, though he is the best representative of the Jewish-Greek philosophy of the first century, in its efforts to find, by blending the religious speculations of the two nations, a mediator between God and man, he cannot be considered the true founder of that Christian Logos-doctrine which framed our creeds, and still governs the best thought of Christendom.

This message of salvation was conveyed in the Christian revelation, which has its centre in the Incarnation. The society which Christ founded did not at first apprehend all the truth about His Person; but it was guided by a kind of instinct (rightly attributed to the indwelling Spirit whom the Father sent in Christ's name), which enabled it to discriminate as questions arose, and to bar, one after another, all the false paths which lay open on either hand. In doing this the Church claimed, with perfect justice, that she was only interpreting the original revelation, not adding anything new to it. The theologian who first arrived at the accurate enunciation of a dogma was said "to interpret the mystical tradition of the Church." It is plain from the documents that this is true. Most of the work of the dogmatists was devoted to recovering and vitalising truths which *we* can find easily enough in the New Testament, but which were imperfectly understood in the sub-Apostolic period. The impatience of dogmatic controversy which is characteristic of the present age is largely due to a misunderstanding of its object. If it were generally realised that the object of the debates which produced the Athanasian creed was mainly to arrive at a clear understanding of the meaning

[1] Θέμις οὔκ ἐστι θνητὸν ἀθανάτῳ συνοικῆσαι, he says plainly. Nevertheless, he admits Logophanies or Theophanies in human shape, and would not have been offended by the statement ὁ λόγος ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί. The difference between Philo's Logos and St. John's is sometimes exaggerated.

of the concepts "God" and "Man" and the actual relation between them, and that that so-called creed was an attempt to summarise the results which Christian philosophy believed itself to have established up to that time, it would be allowed to take its true place as a historical document of the highest interest, which, though perhaps unsuitable as a public confession of faith for mixed congregations, deserves the respect and attention of all who value exact thought on the highest subjects. If religious philosophy were an attempt to solve purely intellectual puzzles, this impatience of metaphysics might be excusable in view of the scanty harvest of results to which pure philosophy can point. But in reality theological speculation has always maintained a close connexion with the religious consciousness of the thinkers and their contemporaries. The facts which supplied the framework of Christian dogma were not only the events which occurred in Judæa in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius; they were also the experiences, repeated in each generation, of the human soul in its conflicts with sin, its sufferings, its death unto sin, and its new life unto righteousness. Consciously or unconsciously, the ultimate appeal has always been to conscience and experience; and I believe that a careful investigation of the psychological basis of dogmas, particularly those about the Person of Christ, would do much to vitalise and render intelligible old controversies, which we often ignorantly suppose to have been merely barren logomachies.

The doctrine of the Divinity of Christ was at first of the nature of a splendid intuition. The problems which it solved were more manifest than those which it raised. The task of theology and of philosophy, in the generations which followed, was to determine what readjustments of the two concepts, "God" and "Man," were made necessary by the new revelation.

I need hardly say that it would be impossible to give even the barest sketch of the history of Christological dogma within the limits of a short essay. A few generalisations only can be included.

It has been said[1] that the Greek Church, in the early centuries when she was in her prime, worshipped Christ mainly as the Divine *Prophet*, who has revealed to us the life-giving mysteries of the Kingdom of God. To the Roman Church He was the *King*, the supreme Head of a great hierarchy, whose Gospel was a new law, and obedience to whose officers was the condition of membership of His Kingdom. Protestantism emphasised the third of His offices. To it Christ was the great High *Priest*, the Atoner and Mediator between God and man. Thus the three chief forms or branches of Christendom have illustrated respectively the Wisdom, the Power, and the Love of the Son of God.

Again, for many centuries the Divine element in our Lord's Person was allowed to predominate too much over the human. In the Catholic Middle Ages the idea of the Church drove the figure of Christ into the background. Except in the Eucharist, when He was said to be "made" (*confectus*) and distributed by the priest, He was considered to stand in almost deistic aloofness from the Christian body, and was mainly thought of as the future Judge. The mythical figures of the "Queen of Heaven" and the other saints were decked out as a kind of substitute. On the other hand, during the two centuries after the Reformation the humanity of Christ was over-emphasised under the influence of forensic theories of the atonement, which presented the dualism of nature and grace in a still harsher form than it had yet exhibited. The idealistic philosophy of the last century and a half has, we may hope, brought back Christology to its true path by showing us how the

[1] By Dorner, in his well-known work on the Person of Christ.

Divine and human may be united without confusion and distinguished without separation.

However, the first steps in the evolution of doctrine about the Person of Christ are still interesting and instructive, and a few words about them will not be superfluous.

Among the earliest attempts at a definite theory of the Incarnation were those known as *Adoptianism* and *Docetism.* The former theory insisted on the real exaltation of Christ as a reward for His perfect obedience and goodness. Jesus was the man chosen by God as the habitation of the Holy Spirit, who, after being proved, was invested with the Lordship of creation by Divine decree. This theology, which is to some extent countenanced by the *Shepherd* of Hermas, was at one time widely spread, as is shown by the half-canonical authority which was ascribed to the *Shepherd.* Its divergence from the orthodox Christology may be most briefly stated in the formula that it made Jesus Son of God by decree (*κατὰ γνώμην*), and not by nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*).

Docetism is pneumatic or spiritual Christianity, based on Gnostic doctrines as to the unreality of the phenomenal world. Christ, according to this view, is the "Godhead veiled in flesh." The doctrine of the two natures had not, at this time, been formulated, and Docetism made the human nature only an appearance of the Divine. The usual opinion was that God was "made manifest in the flesh" for the instruction of mankind, who could not come into immediate contact with God in any other way. The idea of *Incarnation* was lost in that of *Revelation.* This theory is obviously more in accordance with *Greek* notions than Adoptianism. It emphasised the pre-existence of Christ "in the form of God," and made it easy to identify Him with the "Beginning of the Creation of God," that is with the principle of life in the universe. It also regarded His assumption of flesh as in itself a

humiliation, a notion quite foreign to Jewish thought. The latter, however, asserted itself victoriously against the attempts to get rid of the "resurrection of the flesh" as an article in the Christian creed, and so preserved the Johannine *Logos-theology*, in which the reality of the Incarnation is as much insisted on as the all-pervading power of the Son as the life and light of the world.

This Logos-theology, which was laid down in the later Pauline epistles and the fourth gospel, and developed by the Apologists of the second century and the Christian Platonists of the third, may be summed up in the following statements of doctrine. God the Father dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. God the Son is the First Principle (ἀρχή) in relation to the creatures; He is the World-Spirit and World-Principle—the thought, word, and deed of God. The ideal world, of which the visible world is an appearance, is contained in the Logos. But the visible world is material and manifold, while the Logos is spiritual and one. The Son was, in the words of the Nicene Creed, "begotten before all worlds," that is, He did not attain a hypostasis only in the act of creation. But some of the Christian Platonists were disposed to follow the Stoics in distinguishing between the Unspoken Word, immanent from all eternity in the mind of the Father (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος), and the world-principle (λόγος προφορικός). This seems to be the view of Clement. The Son is God by essence, not by communication: He is of the same substance with the Father (ὁμοούσιος is used by Clement); "one Lord, one from one, God from God, impress and image of the Godhead, active Word (or Reason), wisdom which embraces the whole system of the universe, power which produces all creation, invisible, incorruptible, immortal, and eternal."[1]

[1] Gregory Thaumaturgus. This creed sums up Origen's theology, as Harnack says, *History of Dogma*, vol. ii. p. 355.

The generation of the Son is a continual act, says Origen; but both he and the other Platonising theologians avoid the technical word "emanation" (προβολή). The Son is a Person, "the Wisdom of God substantially existing," not an impersonal force. Thus, though the Platonism of these thinkers pointed clearly to a subordination of the Son to the one "Fountain of Godhead," they strove to avoid placing the second Person in a category of essential inferiority.

The great aim of the Christian Platonists was to bring the Incarnation into closest relation with the cosmic process. It need hardly be said that no Christian philosophy can have any value which does not do this. But the attempt to express the whole of Christian dogma in terms of the Platonic philosophy was not successful. It is significant that Athanasius says to the Pagan philosophers, "What can you find to object to in our teaching except our statement that the Word was made Flesh?" It was just this dogma which was in danger. The doctrine of immanence, if allowed to take the position of the one important truth of religion, attenuates the personality both of God and man, and debases the currency of the word "God." "God became man that man might become God" was the favourite way of stating the purpose of the Incarnation. In this way the unique dignity of Christ suffered, and His personality was almost lost. Alexandrian Platonism had not quite solved the problem of the Person of Christ.

Arianism was nursed in the Antiochene school of critical exegesis, and was developed with the aid of Aristotelian rationalism. Its doctrine was an impossible combination of the old Adoptianism with a kind of Neoplatonic emanation theory, which taught that as God cannot communicate directly with man, a "heavenly Creature" was necessary as a mediator. Its Christology

was hopeless; no sense can be made of the formula *ὁμοιούσιος τῷ Πατρί*, and their Christ could not be more than a Teacher and Example. The Catholics of the fourth century were guided by a true instinct in standing out for the test-word *ὁμοούσιος*, but in their recoil from Arianism they came perilously near to Sabellianism—that is to say, to making the Son a mere mode or phase of the Father's activity—and were in some danger of forgetting the Logos-doctrine, which is the foundation of all true religious philosophy. The Son was more and more severed from the world-history, and almost identified with the Absolute. In this way the gulf between God and the world, which the Alexandrians had tried to span, yawned as widely as ever.

It seems to be the opinion of many modern students of dogma that the Church took her first false step at the Council of Chalcedon, and that by condemning Monophysitism she rejected the deepest thought of the Greek Fathers. The question can only be argued out when we have arrived at an accurate conception of the meaning of the two terms "Nature" and "Person," and how they differ from each other. But the truth is that great confusion prevailed in the use of the Greek words *φύσις*, *οὐσία*, and *ὑπόστασις*. The last word, which in the *De Mundo*[1] is used for *reality* as opposed to appearance, is in the Stoical writers identical with *οὐσία*, and is so used by Gregory of Nyssa. But the Alexandrians and Athanasius distinguish between them, and define *hypostasis* as "*οὐσία* with certain distinguishing characteristics." In the fourth century *φύσις* and *οὐσία* are used as identical terms, and Cyril speaks of *μία φύσις τοῦ Λόγου*. The subject was further complicated when theology became bilingual, for Latin is as weak in metaphysical as it is strong in legal terminology. *Substantia* was used for *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*, until it became

[1] *De Mundo*, 4, 21.

necessary to distinguish between them, when *persona*, which is the proper equivalent of *πρόσωπον*, not of *ὑπόστασις*, was accepted to represent the latter word, though *πρόσωπον* was regarded as Sabellian. Both *persona* and *natura* introduced new ideas, connected with law and equity, which were foreign to the Greek words. It would be impossible in a short essay to attempt to unravel this tangled web. The Catholic doctrine was and is that there are two natures in the Son of God, the Divine and the human, which are joined together in a third term—His Substance or Person. The Personality of the Logos, as all-powerful, is capable of holding together the two natures, however widely separated. The conception is a difficult one, and the difficulty was accentuated when out of the embers of the Monophysite controversy there arose the Monothelite. For what is the Personality apart from the Will? And how could an "impersonal humanity" have a will at all? Nevertheless, the Church was probably right in rejecting both Monophysitism and Monothelitism. If there is an essential likeness between the Divine and human—if man is made in the image of God—the "perfect man" must (in some sense) have a self-existing, inalienable individuality—a "Nature"—even as we predicate of God that He is pre-eminently personal and self-existing. If the Incarnation of the Son was incompatible with the existence of a human nature in Christ, or of His human will, we must consider that the perfect union of man with God consists in an *absorption* of the human nature, or of the human will, into the Divine. Then the process of salvation for us too would consist in a progressive destruction, not merely of *separation*, but of *distinction*, between man and God. But this is not the Christian doctrine. The ideal goal which we contemplate and hope for is a state in which our nature and will shall be perfect instruments of the Divine nature and will, but

in which they shall remain in a condition of free subordination to the Divine—not abolished or absorbed, so as to lose all possibility of *communion*, nor yet so separate as to admit only of an ethical harmony. The Divine and human natures, in the beatified state, are to be really united, but yet to remain distinct; and in saying that this union is perfectly consummated in Christ we set before ourselves an ideal goal — "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—which safeguards both the immanence and the transcendence of God. Here therefore, even in that controversy which more than all others is supposed to illustrate the barren logomachies of dogmatic theology, we find that the deepest consciousness of the human soul was the guiding principle, and that the rulers of the Church were rightly inspired.

The truth which was contained in Monophysitism, and which Western theology in its reaction against it was often in danger of losing,[1] was that the difference between the Divine and human natures, immense as it is, is not absolute. Man is a partaker of the Divine nature, and, as a member of Christ, is capable of reigning with Him in His glory. The true idea of man is not realised in the first creation, but in the second, in the "new man," who is no longer alienated from the life of God, but who "after God" (*i.e.* in conformity with the nature of God) has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. iv. 17–24). The doctrine, when rightly understood, is far removed from arrogant self-deification. Though we must always feel that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts; yet at the same time we must assert

[1] The doctrine of περιχώρησις (mutual interchange of attributes between the Divine and human natures) gave back to the Easterns much of what they wanted, and monophysite ways of thinking retained a footing in the Church under the authority of the Pseudo-Dionysius, whose writings strongly influenced mediæval mysticism.

with equal insistence that God and man are even now reconciled. Religion only lives in this radical antithesis, and is in danger of death whenever either the infinite littleness or the infinite greatness of human nature is forgotten. The preservation in Christianity of this *other* side of the truth, which was in some peril after the defeat of Monophysitism, was mainly due to the Mystics. The father of Catholic mysticism, "Dionysius," was unquestionably a monophysite, whose beliefs as to the world of matter led him to take a half-docetic view of our Lord's humanity. This was no solution of the problem, and pointed back to the Christological speculations of the second century. His imitator, Maximus, in his recoil from the Monophysitism which he felt to be a danger to himself, developed a theory of symbolism which gave the visible world more reality. With him a dim, religious light takes the place of the "Divine darkness" of Dionysius. Duality, in his system, is a primary condition of true unity; the world is a symbol of God, and God (one might almost say) is a symbol of the world. "Sensuous knowledge," he says, "is symbolical knowledge of noumenal truth." It is the perfect work of love to bring about an interchange of qualities. A true "marriage" between God and man is the necessary end of the ascending and descending lines of approach. The advent of the historical Christ he regards as only the climax of many earlier and partial incarnations. Like William Law, he held that "the eternal Word or Son of God did not then first begin to be the Saviour of the world when He was born in Bethlehem of Judæa." The Logos is continually becoming flesh in various ways. At the same time Maximus holds that the whole beneficial action of symbols lies in gradually destroying themselves, and he does not except the contemplation of Christ after the flesh from this universal law. We must pass through the manifold

to the monad, he says. Our mind first attaches itself, not to the naked Logos, but to the Word Incarnate. But gradually, as we advance through the Spirit, we "get rid of the husk of language (the literal meaning) by more refined contemplations, we are united purely with the pure Christ, so far as is possible to men, and are able to say with St. Paul that we know no more after the flesh." In this passage we have marked out for us the road which speculative mysticism generally tends to follow. It is a road which takes us back towards the dreamy idealism of Asiatic thought. It rests on a half truth, an abstract view of reality. It assumes that knowledge which is *immediate* must be higher than knowledge which is mediated through something else, and in the last resort hopes to dispense even with our Divine-Human Mediator. This is, I say, a half truth or more than a half truth. Our Lord never claimed to be the Absolute: He is the Way, not the goal; the ultimate limit of religion is that indicated by St. Paul, "God shall be all in all." The chief error of mediæval mysticism is that it concentrated all its thought upon this ideal goal, and regarded the process which leads thither as of no actual value. The return to God was envisaged as a return from the unreal to the real, and in such a journey the shortest road is obviously the best. But philosophy has now proved that we cannot annihilate the process without also annihilating the goal. The God of the mystic who travels by the *via negativa*, casting away all symbols and all attributes of the Deity as so many veils which hide His face, is an empty Infinite. There is also another consideration which must make us hesitate to accept Maximus' account of the normal progress of the spiritual life. Experience shows that intense devotion, so far from blurring the outlines of the human Christ, revivifies and illuminates His image to the mind. This is, I think, an indication that the Incarnation is much

more than the husk of a higher truth; that it is a symbol which has an integral connexion with the thing symbolised, and which, as springing from the constitution of the human mind, which is itself based in the primal ground of all being, might claim objective truth even in the absence of external evidence.

The influence of Dionysius and Maximus throughout the Middle Ages was enormous; but the Latin Church characteristically developed that part of their system which rests on the celestial and terrestrial hierarchies, and exalted the latter till it usurped the place of the Incarnate Word, while devout spirits were allowed to regain for themselves, in mystical contemplation, the Christ as the Lover of their souls. But the German speculative mystics rested their whole religion on the Incarnation, which they interpreted as an universal law of the spiritual life, the joyful message of salvation revealed to mankind through Christ. Their philosophical position is weakened by the same vacillation about the value of the phenomenal world which we find in Maximus. They sometimes disparage visible things in the manner of Dionysius, and sometimes attempt to give them a real importance, as when Suso says, "Whoso realises the inward in the outward, to him the inward becomes more inward than to him who only recognises the inward in the inward." The impersonality of Christ's humanity was to them a cardinal doctrine; for the goal of all our striving is that the human personality may become so completely the organ of the Divine that "we may be to God what a man's hand is to a man," and that "I" and "mine" may cease to have any meaning. "Christ's human nature," says the author of the *German Theology*, "was utterly bereft of self, and was nothing else but a house and habitation of God." This, unless by "self" we understand self-will, is Monophysitism. But the Eternal Son, they say, is by no means born in Christ

alone. It is only sin which debars us from "becoming by grace what Christ is by nature."

I have already indicated the dangers to which this line of thought—with which, notwithstanding, I have great sympathy—exposes us. German mysticism was, in fact, to some extent discredited by the many fantastic errors, not always confined to speculation, which arose in connexion with it. Luther showed great impatience with the "spiritualists" of his day, and refused to give any countenance to men like Sebastian Frank and Carlstadt, who were genuine disciples of the Eckhartian school. And so the post-Reformation theology, which should have been the heir of these Christian idealists, fell again under the yoke of Aristotle; and the sharp dualism of nature and grace, with the allied doctrine of imputed righteousness, made a scientific Christology as impossible as in the unreformed Church. We find the same tendency in English deism, which banished God from the world and threw the greatest difficulties in the way of belief in an Incarnation. These imperfect conceptions of the nature of the Eternal Word are caused by the ever-recurring dualism which regards God and man as disparate and incommensurable terms. It is a tendency which appears as a necessary and proper reaction from the premature syntheses which are constantly being attempted; but this admission need not prevent us from seeing that no further development of Christology, and no enlightenment of any kind, can come from this side.

The problem is how to conceive of the Godhead and manhood as elements which are not mutually exclusive, while at the same time neither is allowed to curtail the other. For instance, Jesus as man increased in wisdom and stature, but we can by no means allow that there is any growth in God, for this would be to subordinate Him, for whom a thousand years are as one day, to the

category of time. The development of humanity, whether in the race or in the individual, must not be identified with the life of God. If philosophers are justified in saying that God the Father must need "an Other" in order to come to Himself, that "Other" is the eternal Logos (who may perhaps be considered to bear a relation to the whole universe of created things analogous to that which our life as immortal spirits bears to our changing states), and not the developing life of the human race. There is a history of humanity; there is no history of God. But the cosmic process, of which the Word of God is the creating Instrument, the Immanent Life, and the End, is, as I have said, a real "moment" or "phase" (the metaphors are inadequate attempts to represent what no words can express) of God's life, and the laws which govern it are the laws in which His will always and everywhere manifests itself, so far as it can be manifested under the imperfect forms of time and space. The doctrine "*humana natura capax divinæ*" means that though we cannot emancipate ourselves from the limitations of a life lived under these forms, which are seen on examination to contain inner contradictions, yet there is that in the human spirit which stretches into the infinite. As St. Augustine says, "We are made for God, and our hearts can find no peace till they rest in Him." That this union with God is the ideal consummation of religion, and that at the same time the life of religion is entirely occupied with finite relations, is the paradox or mystery of the "*unio mystica*" which Christianity does not attempt to explain. It leaves us, we must admit, with an unresolved dualism, but it shows us where the solution must lie, and at the same time makes it clear to us that the mystery is one which must, from its very nature, be insoluble to the finite spirit. The ancient theologians never forgot this, in spite of their anxiety to secure the utmost

possible exactness (ἀκρίβεια) in their language about the Incarnation. They desired that their language about God should accurately express their thought, while at the same time they acknowledged, or rather insisted, that the subject transcends thought.[1]

Up to this point I have assumed that Catholic dogma is a kind of commentary on the preface to the fourth gospel, the fruit of a careful philosophical and psychological analysis of the terms used in stating the doctrines of the Incarnation and mystical union. But we must not forget that the creeds are partly in the form of historical statements, which are given as the subject-matter of religious faith. And we must not evade the question: Are these historical propositions still an integral part of the Christian religion as a living force in the world? If we would give a satisfactory answer to this question, we must try to get a clearer idea of what dogma is, and what place it really holds in religious life and thought.

There are some to whom dogma appears to be an impure mixture of thoughts, sensible images, and legends, the result of a wholly illegitimate attempt to combine myth and philosophy by turning them both, absurdly, into history. Philosophy and mythology are, it is assumed, the only two ways of representing the highest intuitions of the human spirit: the former is pure thought, and deals with general notions only; the latter is conscious allegory, the avowed object of which is to give vividness to our intuitions and to furnish us, as Plato said, with a raft on which we may accomplish our voyage through life in safety. When philosophy begins to personify her abstractions, and when myth lays claim to historical accuracy, both become ridiculous, and unworthy of the attention of serious thinkers.

[1] cf. *e.g.* AUGUSTINE, *De Trin.* v. 1, quoted by OTTLEY, *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, vol. ii. p. 274.

Now it would be easy to show that the proposed arrangement, by which, we may presume, philosophy is assigned to the educated man as his religion, while the vulgar are bidden to be content with myth, is open to the same charge of want of moral seriousness which is brought against the dogmatists. Metaphysical speculation, as I have already said, shows us no God whom we can worship; indeed the philosopher, as such, is not a worshipper; his business is to find the true, not to adore the good. And when speculative thinkers propose to use myth to give warmth and colour to their pale categories—to retain the figure of the idealised Christ as part of their mental furniture, while believing that ecclesiastical dogma has converted the most glorious intuition of the human imagination into a soulless record of unnatural and impossible portents—they are playing tricks with their souls, which is a very dangerous game. To maintain a myth, which we know to be only a myth, with a view to edification, is a dishonesty to ourselves and others, which brings with it a heavy retribution. I am not speaking of the allegory which pretends to be nothing more—that will always have its place—but of the deliberate use of illusion to produce certain desired effects. This, I say, shows a lack of seriousness and sincerity.

The truth is, that philosophical speculation and conscious allegory are not the forms in which religious ideas naturally express themselves. The religious life moves in an atmosphere neither of pure thought nor of poetical imagination; it hovers between the seen and the unseen, between the temporal and the eternal, and will renounce its fellowship with neither. Like Virgil's "Rumour," "ingreditur solo, et caput inter nubila condit." And so the normal *form* of religious faith is an event, or series of events, which is conceived as having actually taken place, and which is valued as the symbol or sacrament of an

eternal and spiritual truth. I use the word symbol, not as an equivalent for a poetical image, and not (as some use it) of an arbitrary and conventional sign; but of a fact or occurrence in the phenomenal world which, in being what it is, signifies something else in a higher order. No appearance in space or time can fully represent an eternal fact; and the connexion between form and idea is subjective in the sense that it rests on individual feeling; but the connexion is real to us, and creative fancy, if it works at all, does not work consciously, as it does in allegory. Symbols in this sense are, as I have said, the natural *form* for religious ideas. The justification of them lies in the duality of all experience, a duality which both religion and ethics must *assume* to be only apparent. For in the moral life also it is plain that if there is no essential connexion between the spiritual fact and its temporal manifestation, the soul cannot be soiled by the deeds of the body; the mind is impeccable, as Plotinus said. Religion then assumes that there is a phenomenal and a spiritual side to all experience, and regards the former as symbolic of the latter. In the case of a Divine revelation it is expected that the local and temporal manifestations will correspond with the magnitude of the message; and too often the fire and the earthquake, rather than the still small voice, are considered to be the most appropriate means of making the will of God known to His creatures.

Dogmatic theology, in so far as it deals with historical propositions, is an attempt to formulate the lower, the phenomenal, side of the Christian revelation. The attempt was a necessity; all religions have done the same; and we must face the fact that no religion has found any difficulty in manufacturing symbols to supply its needs. The creation of religious symbols has taken place in perfectly good faith, and, it must be added, by

perfectly good logic. So long as men are convinced that a spiritual revelation, the truth of which is certain to them, must have, as its inseparable concomitant, certain events in the visible order, they are justified in stating positively that those events actually occurred. They usually appeal to external historical evidence in support of their beliefs; but it is quite certain that the historical evidence is not the ground of their conviction. The evidence for miracles, for example, if treated in the manner of Paley and the evidential school, is almost worthless, because on the hypothesis of its being false we can say with confidence that it, or something like it, would have been invented. But the connexion of ideas, proved by the value set upon the historical narrative, and the vitality of belief in the supernatural are hard facts; and those who impugn the truth of the history often forget that they have to account for those facts. Every man who, while striving earnestly to lead the Christian life, keeping God always before him, and taking Christ as his model in all the relations of life, finds the idea of the human Christ, including His miracles and resurrection, an integral part of his religious faith, adds something (I do not say that it is much) to the evidence for the historical side of Christianity, including (again) its miracles. It is not fair to say that a deep faith must also be a narrow one. Those who believe deeply have a good right to be heard in such a matter. But two cautions are necessary: (1) that religious symbols soon acquire a conventional as well as a real connexion with the things symbolised—I mean that they become the natural *language* of piety, and as such may be used and stoutly defended even by those whose religious consciousness would not, independently, create or find satisfaction in them; and (2) that the strength of the argument for the uniformity of nature is imperfectly apprehended by

the majority of those who have not received a scientific education.

How is it that symbols sometimes lose their power? It is when they fail to represent to the mind the things symbolised. They then become bare fact or bare fable, and either change is fatal to them. To a certain extent this is what is in danger of happening with regard to the great doctrines about the Person of Christ. The mischief really began a very long time ago, when the Church was first driven to institute tests to safeguard the purity and consistency of her teaching. In order to exclude heretics the formulas of the Church were turned into legal documents, the acceptance of which was the test of Church membership. But religious symbols cannot be so treated without danger of separating the symbol from the thing symbolised. The real basis of our belief in the resurrection of Christ is a great psychological fact—a spiritual experience. We know that Christ is risen, because, as St. Paul says, we are risen with Him. If this basis is forgotten, the event becomes an isolated occurrence in past history, which from its very uniqueness is unimportant, and also impossible to establish. Whenever the carnal mind (to use St. Paul's phrase) is set to judge of spiritual things, this degradation of the symbol into a bare fact is bound to occur. And as a bare fact has no religious content, its flank is fatally open to the attacks of scepticism. It is a dead fact, and it is the nature of dead things to decompose and vanish.

But the long-standing secularisation of dogma is not the only reason why much of it holds a precarious position at the present time. The miraculous element in the Gospels is a very serious crux. This is a burning question, on which both caution and candour are necessary. Primitive man lives among miracles; he expects them, and he finds them. By miracle I mean what the

word has always meant in periods when such miracles are reported—a special intervention of the Divine will, contrary to the natural order of things. This is the notion of miracle in the Bible as well as in profane literature. In unscientific ages belief in miracles is not a sign of piety. Everybody shares it; it puts no strain on the conscience of men; it is simply the most obvious and natural way to account for anything unusual. The Jews and King Herod saw nothing improbable in the supposition that Christ was Elijah, or even John the Baptist, who had just been beheaded. They did not doubt His miracles; they attributed them to Beelzebub. These are indications of a state of mind so different from our own that we cannot be surprised if the religious symbols of that age do not appeal to us quite as they did to the first Christians. The difficulties which many people now feel about these miracles may be stated quite candidly as follows: "(1) They are unlikely. The laws of nature appear to be uniform; and persons of acknowledged sanctity among ourselves do not show a trace of supernatural powers. (2) They are unmeaning. We should not now expect, *a priori*, that the Incarnate Logos would be born without a human father, that He would suspend His own laws during His sojourn on earth, or that He would resuscitate His earthly body and remove it into the sky; nor do we see that those events, however well proved, are of any value as evidence for His divinity. (3) They are disturbing. What we want to be assured of is not the power of the Logos to alter the laws of nature—that would be a poor consolation, since within our experience they never are altered—but rather that the Divine life can be lived under essentially human conditions, and that the course of nature does *not* need to be regulated like a faulty machine. An Incarnation which needs to be helped out by supernatural intervention is not a complete Incarnation." On

the other hand, there is a vast number of persons, endowed both with brains and piety, who still feel the miraculous element in the Gospels to be an integral part of their religious belief, and who are firmly convinced that the religion of Christ must stand or fall with the physical resurrection on the third day. I have already said that the continued existence of such a belief, so contrary to the spirit of the age, is a fact which no one can venture to disregard, for it bears all the appearance of being an instinctive demand of the basal personality in those who hold it. There is still, and probably always will be, a large number of people who cling tenaciously to the belief—as a postulate of the practical reason—that there must be *some* interaction between the physical and psychical (or spiritual) worlds, of such a kind as to give evidence of the supremacy of the spiritual order, by forcing the natural order to do homage to it. Without any evidence of such interaction they would see no escape from blank materialism or absolute scepticism. It need hardly be said that many thinkers, who are not writing in the interests of Christian dogma, maintain this interaction against the rival hypothesis of psycho-physical parallelism. Once admit this possibility, and there is no bar to accepting miracle if it is well attested.[1]

It is plain, then, that there is at present no agreement whether miracles are to be expected or desired as part of

[1] In view of the hostile criticism to which the doctrine of parallelism has lately been subjected in Dr. Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, it may not be superfluous to state that the theory professes to be a working hypothesis, not a metaphysical principle; that its ablest exponents are neither dualists nor advocates of materialistic "Naturalism," but idealists, and that those who wish to understand it should study Fechner, Paulsen, and Wundt, rather than physicists like Haeckel. The theory of psycho-physical parallelism no doubt makes miracle in the strict sense impossible, but the belief in *pan-psychism*, which Fechner, the greatest exponent of this theory, advocates as the most probable and consistent cosmological hypothesis, is by no means inconsistent with a deeply religious view of life, and indeed is quite in harmony with the Logos-doctrine as developed by orthodox Greek philosophy.

a revelation of the Divine life and character. It is a subject on which it is very difficult, and generally quite useless, to argue. Religious tradition draws us in one direction, the spirit of the age in the other. Those whose attitude is not determined by one or other of these forces are for the most part influenced by their unformulated philosophy of life, the result of their outward and inward experience; a philosophy which is generally much deeper and more respectable than the arguments which they can adduce in favour of it. It is this which makes theological controversy so generally barren and futile: the disputants on both sides have reasons for their beliefs which they cannot express, and of which they are more than half unconscious: they try to reason, because they are on their defence, but they are not prepared to acknowledge defeat, because they know that their convictions are too deep to be upset by mere logic; and so the only result of the discussion is a mutual suspicion of disingenuousness. But there are one or two considerations which I think may be profitably offered on this very difficult topic.

Religion, when it confines itself strictly to its own province, never speaks in the past tense. It is concerned only with what is, not with what was. History as history is not its business. And abstract science, which concerns itself with the relations which prevail between phenomena, without reference to ultimate truth, is not its business either. Events or aspects of events, which relate *only* to the past, may be left to historians. Phenomena or aspects of phenomena, which relate *only* to the material world, may be left to men of science. Errors in history, or errors in science, do not save or damn. Errors in religion are always due to what Plato calls "the lie in the soul"; but a man may believe in "Brute the Trojan," or in the philosopher's stone, without being a knave. Religion is a very practical matter: its object, as an intellectual faculty, is to

see things as they are, not to discover how they came to be. This is not said to disparage the past, or to suggest that it is unimportant. The glacial age is extremely important to the engineer, seeing that it hollowed out the valleys through which he has to lay his road or railway; but a man may be a very good engineer and at the same time a very bad geologist. In the same way a religious genius may be a very bad historian, and know nothing of science. These subjects are not his business, and he is not really interested in them. When the theologian puts historical propositions into his creed, he does so because he is convinced that there are important truths, in the spiritual order, which are dependent on, or inseparable from, those events in the past. Let us then (to return to the particular topic which we are now considering) ask ourselves, What is the truth, in the spiritual order, which it is intended to protect by the doctrines of the virgin birth, resurrection, and ascension? The answer is plain: it is the identification of the man Christ Jesus with the Word of God. The Church held, and still holds, that this identification is of vital importance, the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae.* In other words, the Church holds that the redemption of humanity, by taking it up into the Divine life, had as its necessary counterpart—its symbol or sacrament in the visible order—the Incarnation of the Word of God in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. We shall therefore reach the centre of our subject if we consider—(1) Is this identification certain? (2) Is it still an integral part of the Christian religion? and (3) Does the doctrine of the divinity of the man Christ Jesus conflict with generally accepted conclusions of philosophy and science, and in particular with the theory or doctrine of evolution?

(1) The historical fact of a supremely important religious movement in the first century A.D. is not disputed, nor can

it be denied that the first Christians believed that it had its source in Christ. But is it certain that the Christ of the Church is not merely an idealised figure, to whom was attributed (in perfectly good faith) all that the religious consciousness of the age found to be most worthy of a Divine Being? The scepticism with which the story of the Incarnation is often regarded by thoughtful people must not be condemned as a perverse refusal to accept a narrative which is unusually well attested, still less as a judicial blindness. In almost all other cases the historian is able to test his materials by some external criterion of probability. He will use Livy or Herodotus as authorities for a history of Rome or Greece, accepting this statement and rejecting that in a manner which would be highly audacious, if it were not that we are now nearly all convinced that many events recorded by those historians are things which, in Dr. Johnson's words, "do not happen." But in the case of the Incarnation we have nothing with which to compare it; the only external criterion to which we can appeal is the judgment of the Christian Church, as to what it "behoved" the Son of God to do and suffer; and this is a matter on which human beings cannot speak with authority and are not likely to agree. The historian of Christianity has to take account of events of an unique kind, which are no better attested than many other narratives which are rejected without hesitation, because they contradict "laws" which we assume to be uniform. It may be answered, as I have already insisted, that the belief of Christians in the gospel narrative does not rest on the historical evidence only, but on the affirmations of the religious consciousness, which demands a visible manifestation of a spiritual fact. But would not this demand be satisfied by the hypothesis of a *diffused* incarnation, a pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, or upon the chosen spirits of a generation, in

consequence of which its sons and daughters began to prophesy, its old men to see visions, and its young men to dream dreams—visions or dreams of an idealised divine-human personality, clothed with all the attributes of perfection which the newly quickened spiritual imagination could suggest? In one sense, the light of the Incarnation must have "shone in the hearts" of the first Christians, as well as "in the face of Jesus Christ." For otherwise they could not have believed in Him (John vi. 44, 45); every process of teaching requires two competent parties, one to speak and one to hear. And is it not possible that it pleased God to "reveal His Son in" the first generation of Christians, as He did in the case of St. Paul, with no historical foundation except the brief ministry of the Galilean prophet, whose pure and elevated character was capable of the necessary idealisation?

It is from no wish to ask a hearing for unprofitable speculations that I think it right to say that theories of this kind cannot be disproved with the completeness which all Christians would desire. In dealing with past events we must be content with something less than certainty. The whole of history is beyond all question honeycombed with false statements which must go for ever uncorrected; even the simplest event or conversation is seldom described with any approach to accuracy by those who have seen or heard it a few minutes before. It is therefore barely honest to assert, as some have done, that, on the historical evidence only, either the discourses of Christ, or His miracles, or His resurrection on the third day after His crucifixion are absolutely certain. The evidence may be as good as possible; it is not possible for it to be good enough to justify such a statement as this.

Can we then appeal to intuition or inward experience to reinforce, or even guarantee, the historical evidence? Unquestionably an intense conviction of the fact of an

Incarnation in the person of Jesus has been for nearly two thousand years a normal result or concomitant of earnest personal religion. This fact is valid evidence for mystics, who believe that growth in grace is accompanied by a progressive enlightenment of the understanding, which may even be compared to the acquisition of a new sense. But even for them it does not amount to proof; for the holiest saint is still far from having reached the height whence all things can be seen in their true proportions. And it will be objected, (*a*) that such evidence is valid only for those who have this experience —intuitions are not transferable; and (*b*) that the mythopœic tendency of the religious consciousness is so pronounced as to throw suspicion upon its affirmations, even when they are supported by historical evidence. We are driven back to the question: Is the demand for a local and temporal Incarnation based on the nature of things, or on the temporary needs of a still only half-developed spiritual sense? This is a question which obviously we cannot answer, since we cannot stand outside our environment. Speaking generally, I do not think that we shall advance in the knowledge of Divine truths by struggling against the anthropomorphism (or rather anthropopsychism) which is natural to us. It is much more to the purpose to try to make the particular specimen of the ἄνθρωπος, whom alone we know, and who is therefore necessarily our type, somewhat less unlike Him in whose image he was made, and whose glory he was intended to reflect.

Those who are not in sympathy with mysticism must be content with such probability as can be arrived at by purely historical methods. And a much higher degree of probability can be claimed, on merely historical grounds, for the general drift of our Lord's teaching, for the extreme beauty of His character, and for the fact that He claimed

to stand in an unique relation to the Father, than for the verbal accuracy of any particular discourse, or for any event, especially of a miraculous character. Moreover, the Ritschlian school is right in insisting that the *impression* which Christ made on those who saw and heard Him is known to us as a solid fact which no criticism can upset.

(2) Let us now ask ourselves what is at stake in this question of a Divine Incarnation in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. The principle of Christianity has now so far come to self-consciousness that the ethical teaching of Christ is almost independent of His authority. I mean that the civilised world now accepts His teaching in theory (though falling sadly short of it in practice) not only because He said it, but because it has been definitively approved by the moral consciousness of civilised humanity. And as for the atonement, that is a truth which belongs to the spiritual order. No shedding of blood—not even that of the Lamb of God—could literally wash away sin. Nor could the physical resurrection of one man, or of many, deprive death of its sting and the grave of its victory. Whether these physical manifestations were *necessary* it is impossible for us to know; but at most they can only be *efficacia signa*, not the efficient *causes*, of our redemption. It cost more than this to redeem our souls.

There is an influential school of thinkers, very numerous in Germany, who believe that in the historical Christ, regarded as a mere man, we have a figure which can serve us as a model of the highest perfection, and which can assure us of the perfectibility of human nature with all the greater certainty in that He never claimed to be other than a man like ourselves. Now I admit that it is difficult for one whose intellectual and religious sympathies are with the Johannine Logos-doctrine and kindred philosophies of later times, to do justice to theories of the

Person of Christ which have a wholly different theological basis. It is useless to argue about the Divinity of Christ until we are agreed what the "Divinity" of Christ means. And I fully recognise that to Christian thinkers of the Ritschlian and Neo-Kantian schools the acceptance of the Nicene formula is impossible. But it seems to me clear that if the Gospel narratives are as trustworthy as some of these writers are obliged by their own theory to hold them to be, then Christ claimed to be not merely the Messiah, or the Son of Man *par excellence*, but to stand in an unique relation to His Father in heaven. This uniqueness may be best expressed by saying that that consciousness of complete identification with the life, the will, and the purpose of God, which with most of us is only the imagined condition of beatified spirits, was with Him an abiding possession, a steady flame illuminating His whole inner life. Nothing at all like it can be found in the lives of the saints; for though a few of them have (rightly or wrongly) believed themselves to have had ecstatic experiences of such union, no sane person has ever claimed it as a permanent condition. If the narratives cannot be trusted in the matter of this claim, which manifestly runs through the whole of the Gospels, it is useless to build anything upon the character of Christ, for we can assert nothing about Him, except that He was the probable author of some striking aphorisms. We have no right to reject not only the miraculous element in the gospel narratives, which, as I have said, must be treated as a separate problem, but half of our Lord's declarations about His own Person, and then to assert confidently that He was a morally perfect character, whom we must reverence as having first fully realised and revealed the true relations between God the Father and mankind. If we reject Christ's testimony to Himself as recorded in the New Testament, we must regard His moral perfection as a hypothesis which

is supported by no sufficient evidence, and which is in itself extremely improbable. For nobody who knows anything of human nature can argue that the most elevated teaching is incompatible with grievous moral weakness. The world has seen too many great moralists whose lives have been very faulty. We must then, on this hypothesis, face the probability that Jesus Christ was not only a mere man, but a sinful man like ourselves. Is it only the force of old associations which makes us shrink with dismay from such an admission? I think not. The sinlessness of Christ is the one of His divine attributes which we cannot afford to part with. We might dispense with the belief in His power over nature whilst He lived as a man amongst men; but to give up His divine *character* is to sever the most precious link in the chain which binds heaven and earth together. If there has been no Incarnation, if no morally perfect Being, perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect, has ever lived on earth, then there has been and is no revelation of God as a Person. The God of nature is impersonal; and the voice of God within our hearts cannot always be distinguished from our own thoughts. The "human voice through the thunder" has never sounded except from the lips of Jesus Christ. His life, as the Gospels represent it to have been, is the confirmation of the declaration that man was made in the image of God; it is an assurance that union with God is not merely a logical conclusion of speculative idealism, but a living truth, which has been, is, and will be. It is an assurance that God is not only an ideal perfection whom we can worship, but a Person who loves us. Whether there are some persons who could entertain the same feelings towards the "bare Logos" (γυμνὸς λόγος), as the Greeks called it—the Eternal Word by whom the worlds were made, and who sustains them in life—

may be a doubtful question; but for the majority there is no doubt that Cyril interprets their feelings rightly when he says, "If the Incarnation was a phantasm, then our salvation is a phantasm too."

There is another way in which the Incarnation is inseparably bound up with the Christian religion. That religion has always been, in its attitude to society, a revolutionary principle, not in the sense of inciting to rebellion against authority, but as involving a complete transvaluation of all the external conditions of life. Even in Mary's hymn at the Annunciation, the note of defiance against the world is sounded: "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek." The first preachers of the Gospel were accused, and justly from the point of view of their opponents, of "turning the world upside down." In the profound transmutation of values which Christianity proclaimed, wealth and social distinction were stripped of all their prestige, and faithful service was declared to be the sole title to honour. But this teaching rested not only on the words of Christ, but on His example. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Thus service and suffering were shown for the first time to be divine; God was manifested in the persecuted and crucified Lover of mankind. The full force of this revelation is sometimes obscured by dwelling too much on the subsequent exaltation of the Christ. He came to reveal God, not as King, but as Love. The "lifting up" of the Son of Man, which has drawn all men to Him, was the crucifixion, not the ascension into heaven. It is His surrender, not His assumption, of almighty

power that has so profoundly altered the standard by which we judge of greatness and success. Deny the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the life of Christ means even less (on this side) than the life of Buddha.

Lastly, our Lord's personality is an integral part of His revelation in a way in which the personality of no other religious teacher is. It was not His method, as with Socrates or Buddha, that was to save mankind, but His Person. His invitation to the weary and heavy-laden is simply, "Come unto Me." Such language without a corresponding perfect life would have been the profoundest self-contradiction, and without the authority which belongs to a Divine Being alone would have been the most amazing arrogance. And as a historical fact, it is His Person and not His method that has overcome the world.

I conclude, then, that belief in the "Divinity" of the historical Christ is still an essential part of Christianity for four reasons: (*a*) If Christ did not claim to be the Son of God, in a sense which applied to Himself alone, the gospels are too untrustworthy to have any historical value. The real Jesus of Nazareth is lost to us irrecoverably. (*b*) There is one essential attribute of divinity which Christianity can never consent to surrender in the case of Christ—namely, His sinlessness. If He was a sinner like ourselves, the union between God and man, which Christianity asserts to be a fact, is still an unrealised ideal. (*c*) The voluntary humiliation of the Lord of all is an integral part of Christianity. (*d*) The highest, most distinctive, and most potent parts of His teaching are bound up with the personal claim.

(3) But I must not end without noticing briefly two objections, one philosophical, the other scientific, which have been raised against the possibility of an Incarnation. It has been felt by some that the life of an individual, however holy and pure, is an inadequate and, in fact,

impossible medium for the expression of the life of God. The attributes which we are accustomed to regard as most intimately and inseparably connected with the nature of God are infinitude, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. How can these attributes be represented in the life of one living under human conditions? Now, in the first place as I have said already, Jesus Christ never claimed to be the Absolute. God as an object of worship —the God of all religion—is not the Absolute, but the highest finite form under which the Absolute can manifest Himself. And, secondly, the attributes of infinitude, omnipresence, and the rest are attributes of God as universal Spirit, but they do not appear to be His highest and most inalienable attributes as an object of human worship or of human knowledge. We must beware of allowing physical and mechanical symbols or metaphors (for those mentioned are nothing better than this) to dominate those other symbols which we borrow from our own moral and spiritual nature. The ideas of justice, mercy, sympathy may bring us nearer to the heart of God than that of omnipotence. There is not necessarily anything divine about omnipotence. It is conceivable that the universe might have been ruled by an omnipotent devil; in which case men would have been found to defy him, and go to his hell coerced, but unsubdued. But perfect love we are able to worship, whether armed with twelve legions of angels, or helpless in the cradle and on the cross. The idea of love is so all-embracing, and stretches out so far into the infinite, that we feel that here, if here only, we are in contact not with a symbol only of God's nature, but with the reality itself. But love, it is needless to say, requires a human or superhuman personality. If then we divest ourselves of the misleading notion of spatial infinity as the highest expression of God's nature, and of the somewhat barbarous

and unethical notion of unlimited arbitrary power as His highest prerogative, we shall find no difficulty in bowing before the name of Jesus as embodying, so far as the nature of things permits, all the fulness of the Godhead.

The scientific objection is connected with the doctrine of evolution, and may be stated in the words of Strauss, who was one of the first to urge it. "The idea does not pour all its riches into a single individual. It is against all analogy that the fulness of perfection should be met with at the outset of any evolution whatsoever; those who place it at the origin of Christianity are victims of the same illusion as the ancients, who placed the Golden Age at the beginning of human history." Now it must be said at once that the answer which popular supernaturalism gives to this objection (and it is an objection which has gained an even sharper edge since Strauss wrote) cannot satisfy us. Even Aristotle protested that "nature is not episodic, like a bad tragedy"; and we may add, in the same spirit, that the dénouement of the great human drama could not be by a *deus ex machina*, "as in a bad tragedy." If the Incarnation occurred two thousand years ago, it must have been because that was the earliest moment at which it was possible, though it had been steadily prepared for since man was created. Rejecting then the answer of miraculous intervention as no answer at all, we offer to the objectors the following considerations. The analogy of other human achievements shows that there is no uniformity in progress, and that some of the higher arts culminated long ago. If sculpture reached its zenith in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., architecture in the Middle Ages, painting at the Italian Renaissance, why may not the highest religious genius have lived two thousand years ago? But there is another answer which is of much greater value. If we inquire what was the relation of Christ's revelation to the past

and the future, we shall find that it was not so catastrophic as is sometimes supposed. The profound words of St. Paul with reference to an incident in Old Testament history—"That Rock was Christ"—should never be forgotten, if we wish to understand that apostle's teaching on the Incarnation. "It may be said," writes William Law, "in a true and certain sense, that from the time of the Fall the Incarnation of the Son of God began, because He was from that time entered again into human nature, as a seed, or beginning of its salvation, hidden under the veil of the law, and not made manifest till He was born in the holy Virgin Mary." And as to the future, we need only refer to St. John (xiv. 12; xvi. 12, 13, 15, 25) to prove that Christianity proclaimed itself from the first to be essentially a principle of growth. The kingdom of the Spirit *means* progressive revelation; it *involves* belief in development, the doctrine of which had never before been so clearly stated as it was by the Christ of the fourth gospel. The purpose of the Incarnation was to inaugurate a new era, not to preclude the possibility of any further advance. Nor does this aspect of the Christian revelation involve any derogation from the absolute supremacy of Christ. According to His own declarations He came on earth to reveal to us *the Father*, and sent us the Holy Spirit to reveal to us *Himself*. The reign of the Spirit *is* the reign of Christ; His office is to exhibit a Christophany in the life of humanity itself.

I do not, then, think that the doctrine of evolution conflicts at all with the Christian doctrine of a historical Incarnation two thousand years ago. But, at the same time, I do not think that we have any right to hurl such names as "infidel" against those who find the difficulties in the way of belief insuperable. The divinity of the historical Christ is a dogma which cannot be proved by external evidence; and though some may claim to have

had it revealed to them in a manner which admits of no doubt, they cannot make their experiences valid for others. The loss of the belief to most of us would be incalculable; it would deprive us of nearly all our joy and peace in believing. But let us remember (so that we may do justice to those who cannot accept it) that without it men may still treasure the supreme ethical revelation of perfect humanity in the gospels, a revelation which would remain a precious treasure to mankind even if it were an unrealised ideal. They may still listen to the voice of God within them, testifying that the law of Christ, as they read it in the New Testament, is the law under which we live; that sin *is* blotted out by love and self-sacrifice; and that every step in moral progress is a passage through death unto life — a crucifixion and resurrection. Christianity so mutilated is an austere and difficult religion, but not an ignoble one; and those who are trying to guide their lives by its light are deserving of sympathy rather than harsh condemnation. It is a comparatively easy thing to do violence to our intellect, when we are desirous on all grounds to reach a certain conclusion. A man who, though of a religious temper, refuses to do this is not far from the kingdom of God. His faith, for faith it often really is, even in the religious sense, may end in definite Christian conviction, or it may not. We can only know in part, while we live here; and we may be sure that "when that which is perfect is come," Christ will own many as His friends who have borne the cross without hoping for the crown.

This discussion may seem unsatisfactory, both in its method and conclusion, to those who have been accustomed to find the "proofs" of Christianity in the historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ, and in the miracles which He is recorded to have wrought while on earth.

This mode of apologetics was very popular in the last century, and was elaborated with great skill by divines whose names are still famous. But it was not an accident that it flourished most at the period when religion was at its very lowest ebb in England. I do not wish to associate myself with the contempt which has been cast upon the "Old Bailey theology" of Paley and his school; but I do wish to impress upon my readers, with all the earnestness that I can, that it is a false method, and that those who rely upon it are trusting to a broken reed, which will pierce their hands as soon as they really lean upon it. The majority of Christians to-day do *not* really lean upon it, whatever they may think; they are Christians because they have found Christ, or rather because Christ has found them, not because they have given the apostles a fair trial on the charge of perjury and acquitted them. The Christ whose claims are made "probable" by such arguments is a dead Christ, who could only preside over a dead church. But we are not driven to base our hope of salvation on probabilities; we know Him in whom we have believed; and those who are even beginning to know Christ as He is will ponder reverently and diligently, but not over anxiously, on what He was. For He was nothing then that He is not now; He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and neither things past, nor things present, nor things to come can separate us from His love.

III.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST

By H. L. WILD

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"YE shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If there is one utterance that might be chosen to express the faith of the best thought of the century that has just closed it would be this. It is the summary of the scientific spirit, so often represented as cold, but possessing in reality a warmth of enthusiasm, capable, as has been shown again and again, of the highest sacrifice, and animated throughout by the unfaltering belief that only in proportion as you approach to the fact in nature as it really is, do you secure anything that is of value for the life of mankind. No doubt it is but a constant process; no doubt with every advance Newton's simile does but more obviously apply: "We are but as children gathering pebbles on the shore." Yet with every advance there comes also the sense of something won and the strengthened hope of more to win: even the gatherings of the shore are a pledge of the interest of the yet unharvested sea, and who will not admit that humanity has gained new strength and power from this new interest in the natural world?

And in the sphere of history that is not less true. There too as yet we do but gather pebbles on the shore; but there too the century closed has given men new

methods and a new enthusiasm, and everywhere the belief that only in proportion as you come to see the event or the period or the character as it was, do you get to anything really valuable: only then can you, in the case of a character for example, separate what was unquestionably its own from what was merely the current coin of the age, only in relation to the age can you determine the real work and intention—what was permanent and what was meant to be permanent—from what was necessarily relative and transitory.

It is some such belief as this that has led, in recent years, to the output of a vast mass of work dealing in one form or another with the life of Jesus. The temper and purpose of that work has been much misunderstood. It has been assumed that it must be either apologetic or heretical, and its authors have been canonised or excommunicated according as their results agreed or disagreed with a supposed standard of orthodoxy. As a rule this was not a fate, for good or evil, that could concern them in their work. They were bound to a different service. It was their purpose, using the best historical methods available, and approaching the matter from a purely historical standpoint, to endeavour to determine who Jesus was, what He taught, what was the character of the age in which He lived. Their conclusions upon such points might agree or disagree with those of others: it was always open to those others to use the same methods to correct them. And so the process has gone on—a constant process—with results upon the thought of the time analogous to the general results of scientific work in the world of nature. A new spirit is abroad: on all hands we are conscious of new interest and new life: the religious atmosphere has been freshened by the honest and straightforward impulse to endeavour to see things as they are, and to follow

the argument hopefully whithersoever it may lead. The new interest alone might make these things worth while, but here as elsewhere new freedom and new power have followed upon new knowledge. The general result of the work has been to create the impression that in presence of this life of Jesus, as in presence of nature, we are still but as children gathering pebbles on the shore, but enough has been secured to assure us of the value of the quest, and the conviction has been steadily gaining ground that from here, if from anywhere, from this life more surely known and better understood, will come all true progress and all gain in power amid our difficulties.

It is not the purpose of this essay to draw out in any detail the results achieved by the great investigators in this field. The most that can be hoped for is that an attitude towards these questions may be suggested and that a brief indication of what is being done may lead more people to study the works of these new religious historians in the spirit in which they were written, as essays or attempts, rather than as final statements upon which new dogmas may at once be based or by which old ones may be at once refuted. Without haste or rest the work goes forward, and none know better than the workers that the end is not yet. In certain regions there is comparative certainty and agreement: in others there is as yet a ceaseless ebb and flow. A position that seemed finally secured may be undermined to-day, to be recovered more firmly to-morrow. Only, while those acquainted with the complexity of the problems can view these changes with equanimity, there can be but little doubt that they give rise to an immense amount of misapprehension in the world at large. There is a vague feeling of unrest and uncertainty. Criticism may take away something—this saying or this act: it is

uncertain what it will ultimately take away; therefore it is assumed that it has already taken all. Such an attitude is no doubt largely the result of ignorance: it is none the less common, and it is too often fatal to religious life. Let us say at once that it is wholly unwarranted by the conclusions reached by the best historians in this field. These men have frankly and fearlessly set themselves to see things as they are and to build upon the most assured views of the original documents, and what strikes us upon an impartial review of their work is not the narrowness, but the breadth and richness of the territory that has been won. The delimitation of frontiers may still be incomplete, but within the debateable regions there reposes a far-stretching land in which the human spirit has already ample room.

In regard to the special subject of this essay, it is to be noticed that the actual work of criticism has necessitated upon the part of these writers a real attempt to enter more deeply into the character and personality of Jesus, and to present His teaching, as a reasonable and connected whole, in relation to its leading ideas. Something that one or other of us may regret may have been omitted by a particular author in deference to what he conceived to be the dictates of truth and the historical spirit, but it must be admitted that what remains has often gained in clearness and logical consistency, as it has gained in certainty. Ambiguities and contradictions that many have felt, though they may have feared to give expression to their feelings, have in many cases been removed or explained. There is no one who can rise from reading such a book as Professor Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus* without feeling, whether he agree or disagree with any particular conclusion, that we are here moving in the right direction; that such studies in their devotion to truth and freedom are destined to form the basis of the religious life of the

future; above all, that through them "that one Face, far from vanish, rather grows."[1]

The work, as we have said, is necessarily tentative, and it depends at every point upon a previous question. For it is quite obvious that we can give no final account of the teaching of Jesus in its manifold details until we have determined once for all the character and value of the records in which that teaching is contained. The materials for the solution of this previous question have vastly increased within the last few years, and an immense amount of labour has been expended on it, but, though much has been secured, no one would venture to maintain that the conclusions reached are at all points final. The nature of the problem has been stated elsewhere in this volume. The purpose of the present essay is to construct upon the foundations there laid a brief account of the methods and teaching of Jesus, grouped as far as possible round the central ideas of that teaching, and based mainly upon the sources now generally admitted to be the earliest, that is to say, upon the Gospel of St. Mark and the so-called Matthew Logia, the collection of sayings which would appear to have been used, in addition to our present St. Mark, by the authors of the two Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. It is further proposed to suggest very briefly the relation of the picture contained in the fourth gospel to that presented by the synoptists, and the extent to which the leading ideas and teaching of that gospel are in accord with theirs. The work has been often done upon a larger scale; the present essay can in no sense claim to be original or complete. Its only object is to suggest to others a possible attitude towards these matters; to lead them to study for themselves the larger works; to indicate how much certainty remains where some few things have become uncertain; and finally to express the belief that criticism, so far from robbing us,

[1] R. Browning, *Epilogue*.

has but made that with which we are most concerned more living and more real.

In any attempt to formulate the teaching of Jesus, we are at the outset confronted by a difficulty, due to the actual methods of that teaching, as the synoptists have recorded them. The teaching was in fact by no means formal. Here and there, as in the Sermon on the Mount, we may find traces of a connected and continuous discourse, but for the most part the teaching takes the form of *obiter dicta*, thrown out as time or occasion suggests. There is apparently no attempt at system; no one thought is worked out or shown in its relation to another; some of the most important matters are not those that are treated in most detail. An isolated passage often affords the clue to a cardinal doctrine. In part this lack of form may be attributed to the records, the gospels, as we have them, being probably primarily books of devotion or manuals of instruction. In these the time sequence was not important. It would be sufficient that they represented the words of the Master. Continuity and order were not of greater moment than they are to the average congregation of to-day. At the same time, when full allowance has been made for a certain breaking up in transmission, there can be no doubt that the synoptic writers have to a great extent preserved for us a true account of Jesus' methods. Here, rather than in the more elaborate discourses of St. John, we have the teaching in its original form. Moreover its fragmentary character was not an accident; it was the result of a reaction against the tone and methods of existing teachers, and was involved in a deliberate attempt to come in contact with the humblest and most ordinary intelligence.

The prevalent system of religious thought inevitably tended to the exclusion of the mass of men. Not merely

were the publicans at once cut off by their profession from the benefits and privileges of religious life, but it was an axiom of proud Pharisaism that "this people which knoweth not the law is cursed." For the ordinary man it must have been practically impossible that he should even make himself acquainted with the demands of so elaborate a routine, and, supposing him to have done so, he had neither the time nor the means for its observance. Once assume that religion is made up of a complicated ritual, that it is dependent upon regulations in regard to victims, washings, garments, clean and unclean meats, and the rest, to say nothing of a graduated scale of alms, and religion becomes a luxury for the rich, the leisured and privileged class; the poor, the workman, the labourer has no choice in such matters. He must eat what he can, wear what he can, worship when and how he can. The motto of the existing Pharisaism might well have been, "How hardly shall they that have not riches enter into the kingdom of God!" And if we assume Him to have aimed at the direct reversal of that view, we have at once the clue to Jesus' method in His teaching.[1]

The first objects of His mission, as He proclaimed it from the outset, were the poor, the weary, the heavy-laden: it was His recognised custom to move freely among those who appeared hopelessly unrighteous when tried by existing standards: and coming to such as these His first object was to address them in the language of their daily lives. The teaching at first sight appears unsystematic; but the common mind is seldom equal to a system, even if it had time to master it. In the teaching of Jesus there is no formal reference to the work of commentator or Rabbi: no esoteric or obscure discussion. The first appeal is to nature—the rain, the sun, the flowers, the birds. An observation of these may afford the first basis

[1] H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestament: Theol:* i. 133.

of faith. The appeal is then to the commonest affairs of daily life, and it is here that the illustrations of the kingdom of God are to be sought. The result is something wholly remarkable. Never surely was a religious teacher so material. From first to last we move in regions of hard fact, so much so that, as has been often shown, the picture of contemporary life is practically complete. The illustrations are drawn from all classes and all circumstances. From king to slave, all are represented in their habit as they lived, and they have been fixed upon the canvas by the unerring hand of one who, as an artist might say, works always with his eye upon the object. Of no classes are the illustrations so frequent as of the two lowest, the hired servants and the slaves. We are enabled to see at a glance the harshness of their condition and the infinite possibilities of oppression. The slaves are beaten with stripes few or many at the will of the master, or often of the overslave, and their lot, together with that of the cripples and beggars, the vagabonds in the streets, even the thieves and robbers and those condemned to crucifixion and imprisonment, is drawn in such a way as to bring before us to the full the severity of the time. These were among the facts that all men knew, and it was through such facts as these that Jesus taught.

Nowhere is the popular tendency of the teaching so clearly seen as in the parables.[1] By means of these Jesus is enabled to bring the whole range of spiritual experience into immediate contact with the affairs of daily life, and within the compass of the most ordinary intelligence. The teaching by parable is akin to the teaching by concrete example: "wise as serpents," "Satan as lightning," "suddenly as a snare." Only in the parable the comparison is more finished and detailed. Sometimes we have the general rule drawn from recurring cases: "the whole have

[1] WENDT, *Teaching of Jesus*, i. p. 115 *seq.*

no need of the physician"; "can the children of the bride-chamber fast?"; "do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Sometimes the single instance is given as it occurred under certain definite circumstances. The comparison is imaginative, but it is everywhere true to the conditions and possibilities of life. There is no need to give examples; such stories as those of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, the Ten Virgins, the Unjust Steward have become part of the common intellectual heritage of the world.

The real character of these stories, as well as of the mode of teaching to which they belong, has been much obscured by allegorical methods of interpretation. Attempts have been often made to press the comparison into every detail. As a rule it is impossible to do this. The analogy between the new point to be enforced and the familiar example often holds only in one important particular. In interpretation it is the main thought to which attention must be directed. The rest is but subordinate to that. The minor characters are often essential to the picture, not to the comparison, and to lay too much stress on them is to miss the whole purpose of this mode of teaching. For in fact, though the parallel may not hold in every detail, yet the rest of the story is not wasted. Thus far the old allegorising commentators were in the right. So much the more of life and of the world is brought within the spiritual region. Mercy, pardon, justice, energy, watchfulness, development, progress—these are shown in these illustrations, not as far-away aspirations of a new and distant kingdom, but as already existing, however imperfectly, in the world of common things. Every detail in these pictures is important, and was meant to be important, as adding to the sense of reality; it is not important for purposes of comparison. The unjust judge is not God, nor is the lord who commends the unjust steward. These are but details.

Importunity in the one case, prudent forethought in the other, these are the points to be enforced by the two parables, and they are expressed in a way that was sure to appeal to the lowliest and the humblest. The teaching of the time had become abstract, esoteric, remote from daily life; in His parables and comparisons Jesus made a deliberate return to what was simple and intelligible.

But amid all the wealth of illustration which at first sight imparts so fragmentary a character to the teaching, it is important to notice that no single feature in the picture of contemporary life is introduced merely for itself. In the Teacher's mind the fragmentary and occasional utterance is always related to the general idea and every detail is closely welded into the religious system as a whole. It is here precisely as with nature. We find ourselves in a world of particulars, amid which it is often hard to disentangle the underlying principle and general law. Yet to do this is essential to real knowledge. At its first appearance, in spite of its apparent popularity, the teaching of Jesus had yet its esoteric side, though in a wholly different sense from the teaching of the scribes. It is a claim that is in fact made for it by Jesus Himself. It is true that everyone who heard Him must have felt, however vaguely, that tidings thus expressed in common language were for all; that religion, if this were religion, had indeed been brought down to earth. Won by His simplicity and authority, the common people heard Him gladly. It was none the less easy to miss the whole import of the message. Many of the parables, as we know, could not be understood in their full bearing by the audiences to which they were first addressed, and certain of the most important doctrines were for a time similarly veiled. The exposition was reserved for those whose devotion was assured, and was purposely withheld from others who might, and in some cases were bound

to misunderstand. The necessity of this course becomes clear if we bear in mind that many of the underlying ideas of the teaching were such as in a purely material sense had long been known to the hearers, and that to transfer them into the spiritual region was a task requiring time and patient guidance. Progress in spiritual matters is, for the mass of men, necessarily slow. But there is yet a further point. For, as we shall presently see more clearly, not merely this mass of detail, but the general ideas themselves to which this is primarily related, and which underlie the teaching of the parables, are at every point made to centre in a living personality. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." To miss this almost indefinable personal element is for us, as for the men of that day, to miss all.

In the synoptic record the importance of this personal element is brought before us with great clearness. We are enabled to see at a glance how vividly for his contemporaries Jesus' mode of life and personality, together with the general atmosphere of His teaching, stood out in contrast with those of all previous teachers. To no one, humanly speaking, did Jesus owe more than to St. John the Baptist; yet from an early period in His ministry He is careful to point out to His disciples the inherent difference of their respective messages. John came in the way of righteousness. The law that He taught was new and searching, but it was still the legal path. There was none greater than John born of woman, but the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. Of all that was involved in the new gospel of the kingdom in free and joyous dependence upon God, John and his disciples could have no idea. The disciples of John fasted, as the Pharisees fasted, as a point of legal and meritorious duty. The Son of Man came eating and drinking; His disciples are as the children of the bridechamber; in the

joy of His companionship and His teaching there is no room for simulated sorrow. Presently there would be real grief and separation, and for that fasting in the solitude of the chamber would be the natural expression, as the tears of St. Peter were the natural sign of a genuine repentance. Mingling with the world, eating with publicans and sinners, the new Teacher presented a striking contrast to the asceticism of the Baptist, and one that was wholly unintelligible to those whose prejudice prevented them from reaching the secret of His freedom.

More striking still to the popular view was the contrast between the freedom and high confidence of the teaching of Jesus and the gloomy scrupulousness of the scribes, alike in matters of conduct and of thought. The words "take no thought" (μὴ μεριμνᾶτε) are used in a well-known passage; they are expressive of an all-pervading tone—the result of a clear and steady vision of the world and of God. There is in Jesus the purity of heart that really sees, and from the inward vision passes at once to judgment and to action. There have been those that have found traces of the Greek joyousness and sense of beauty in Jesus' teaching, and have looked for some influence upon Him of Greek life in the cities of northern Palestine. Such influences can nowhere definitely be traced, but the joy and confidence and sense of beauty are all found in Him in the fullest sense, born of a faith that the Greek did not and could not know. It is this steadiness of outlook that imparts its general tone and character to the teaching, and it is a character so definite that, in regard to much that has been preserved, the internal evidence of genuineness is of quite exceptional force. "Never man spoke like this man" was the verdict of the time, and of many of the sayings, even were the external evidence weaker than it is, we could yet feel a deep assurance that they are no late product of the consciousness of the Church, but must

belong to Jesus and no other, so strong is the impress of His personality and manner. Is it an answer to an entangling question? Is it a discourse? Is it a problem or example drawn from the previous history of the Jews? Everywhere there is the same spontaneity born of the same steadiness of view. To the followers in the hour of their trial the charge is still to "take no previous thought" (μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε), but to do this is not easy, requiring, in fact, the same faith and confidence as characterised the Master.

Nowhere is this impress of personality and this distinctive freedom of tone, with all that it implied, more clearly seen than in the general handling of the books of the Old Testament and the interpretation of the ancient law. There is a wide knowledge of the Old Testament and of the chief events and characters of the national history, such as a Galilean boy might no doubt be able to acquire to a large extent in the schools of the scribes. There is an obvious acquaintance with the apocalyptic literature so much in fashion at the time. There is a constant appeal to the written book: "Have ye not read?" Jesus Himself, "as His custom was," reads the book in the synagogue at Nazareth. But the important thing to notice is how, amid all this, the speaker moves with the confidence of perfect mastery, everywhere adopting the original thought or historical example, sometimes in a wholly unexpected sense, and making it entirely His own. The Old Testament books are quoted under their traditional titles. To have quoted them under any others, even supposing the real authors to have been known, would have been alien to the whole character of the teaching, addressed as we have seen simply and directly to the common people in their common language.

In the handling of the ancient law there is the same freedom of selection and interpretation combined with the utmost reverence. We are in presence of a new order,

in which all that is of value in the old is to be absorbed. "The law and the prophets were until John: since then the kingdom of God is preached, and all men press into it." The worth of the Mosaic law is fully recognised, and those who did not heed it will not be persuaded by a newer revelation. The mission of Jesus is not one of destruction, but of fulfilment; no jot or tittle of the ancient law should fail. Only it must be realised that the law did not and could not speak the final word. The principle underlying its observances is to be grasped and expressed in ever-widening obligation. "The men of old time" had been right enough in regard to the kind of conduct that they prescribed; only of late men had lost sight of the searching character of the demand for inner purity of heart, from which alone all else must spring, as the fruit upon the tree follows upon its nature. The heart is the source of all conduct; the state of the heart determines once for all the character of the act. The new revelation was one of infinite demand upon the disciple in response to infinite sacrifice in the Master and infinite love in the God whom He revealed. Love to God and man is the sole motive, and it is an axiom of love that it does not stop to ask how little it can give, but at once and ungrudgingly gives all.

The whole tone of the teaching was in marked contrast with the pedantry of existing methods. If its demands were wider, its sympathy was immeasurably deeper. Born, as we have seen, of infinite pity for those multitudes for whom the existing religious teaching was necessarily an alien thing, and who appeared as sheep not having a shepherd, the new system did not consist merely of a new set of moral commands, which, as modern writers too often present them, have no authority, and therefore will not be obeyed, or which, human nature being what it is, could but serve, as St. Paul saw, to condemn the world

and not to save it. As is so clearly brought out by one of those supplementary pairs of parables, which form such a characteristic feature in the teaching as it works towards truth from every side, this was not merely a new morality —a few extra commands—patched on to the Mosaic law, increasing its burdensomeness and adding to its difficulty. The new morality was contained in the new bottles of a new life, and involved a new philosophy and new convictions in regard to God and all God's dealings with the world. The moral teaching of Jesus was based, and must still be based, upon certain leading ideas, present to the mind of the Teacher in every fragmentary utterance and imparting to the whole a wonderful unity amid much diversity and apparent contradiction. Above all, as contemporaries felt and as they have so clearly shown, the whole system centred in the living personality of One, whose teaching was with authority, who claimed a reasonable lordship over tradition, who provoked amazement most of all by His power and by the width and freedom of His views. The contrast of all this with the humble origin and humble guise was, as we may well believe, infinitely striking at the time. For us the danger is the common danger of an analytic age. We may attain the utmost precision in regard to some particular point of interpretation or of doctrine; we are apt to be deficient in the imagination or the faith which leads into the actual presence of the Teacher. It is on this account that so much is due to the new school of religious historians. Writing without preconceptions and treating the subject as pure history, they have not merely shown us the teaching of Jesus as a system, but as a system that cannot be separated from the living personality of Jesus Himself.

Among those who have thus endeavoured to present the teaching of Jesus in a systematic form, there has been some discussion with regard to the true order of presenta-

tion. The difficulty has always been to decide which of the great central ideas should stand first. It is a difficulty that is at once explained, if we remember how closely and inseparably these ideas were interwoven in the consciousness of Jesus Himself. If we begin where He Himself began with the preaching of the Kingdom of God, we shall find, so intimately are all the ideas connected, that this will at once involve a consideration of the new doctrine of righteousness and the new revelation of God.

In His doctrine of the Kingdom of God, Jesus attached Himself, as was His wont, to the traditional teaching of His nation. Here, as always, He appears as the scribe bringing out of His treasure things new and old. The conception of the kingdom of God was an old one in Jewish thought, and it was one that had been developed upon various lines. The particular form of it to which Jesus recurred is probably that given in the second chapter of the book of Daniel: "The God of Heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and this kingdom shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." The idea of that passage had proved peculiarly attractive to later Judaism amid the downfall of the national hopes. All the national ideals came to be regarded as continuously existing in heaven, ready to be revealed on earth, and, though for the moment earthly powers and kingdoms might prevail, presently all things would pass under the dominion of the God of Heaven, who was the special protector of the Jews. As a consequence, the earthly establishment of the kingdom of God would ensure a lasting prosperity to the Jewish nation, or at any rate to the righteous portion of it.

In spite of certain material tendencies, it is the chief glory of this people that in all their literature, at all periods of their history, they consistently held to the definition of the kingdom of God as a kingdom of righteousness. The

condition of entry into the kingdom of a righteous God lay in obedience to His righteous law. Only in the times immediately preceding the age of Jesus, owing to a variety of causes upon which we have no space to dwell, the ancient law, as Moses had delivered it and the prophets had interpreted it, had become overlaid with an elaborate system of tradition, extending to every department and detail of life and demanding observance in its most minute particulars, so that the act had become important and not the spirit, and the righteousness which God's kingdom was now supposed to require appeared but as a petty legal righteousness, for which, as a matter of course, God would pay on a fixed and rigorous scale. On all hands daily life, whether secular or religious, had become converted into a dull routine of uninspired tasks: tithings of mint and anise and cummin, new moons and Sabbaths, and the rest. It was the observance of such as these in place of the great broad judgments of Moses and the prophets that was now deemed to be the essential condition of admission to God's kingdom. Little by little out of a false reverence men had separated God from the world; this elaborated law alone was left as a means of communication with Him. What wonder if in such an atmosphere life and religion lost the freshness and inspiration of an earlier time or that the spirits of men—real men like St. Paul—chafed and groaned under the burden? Many of the questions addressed to Jesus reveal the dissatisfaction that was abroad, though all who inquired might not be willing to accept the sweeping conditions of His reform.

For Jesus, as for the older teachers, righteousness was the condition of entry into the kingdom of a righteous God. He begins His preaching with a call to repentance and a very practical review of daily duties. Only the whole conception of duty was changed. The new righteousness

was before all no matter of mere external observance, waiting upon the approbation or the judgment of men. It was an affair of the heart, deep and inward. In word and act it flowed from within, and the sole concern of life was shown to lie in the relation of the individual soul to a Father who seeth in secret, and whose concern with the world and the affairs of men is everywhere close and intimate. It has become common to represent Jesus as a mere moral reformer, and His preaching of the kingdom as a mere forward step in an evolutionary moral process. A moral reformer He indeed was; but the new righteousness that He taught was but the simple and necessary consequence of a new and living theology imparting to the moral teaching all its character and all its force.

The foundation of the moral teaching, as indeed of all the teaching of Jesus, is to be found in the great doctrine of the Father-God. This idea of the Fatherhood of God was not new: it had been employed long since in Jewish thought to describe God's relation to His people. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea xi. 1). "Have we not all one Father? hath not God created us?" (Mal. xi. 10). "Doubtless thou art our Father, O Lord: thou art our Father, our redeemer: Thy name is from everlasting" (Isa. lxiii. 16). Such are among the best-known passages, but they can only be regarded as fragmentary and occasional. With Jesus the suggestion that they contain becomes the cardinal truth of all the teaching. Here, as elsewhere, by the time the public ministry commences whatever had been borrowed in the conception had been appropriated in a new and wholly original sense. The belief appears as the product of the inner consciousness following the suggestions of the outward world and clinging to "the sunnier side" of these in perfect faith. Besides the inward assurance, outward signs of the love of God

were to be seen in the clothing of the lilies, in the rain that falls upon the just and upon the unjust, in the care that extends even to the sparrows. If later Jewish thought out of a false reverence had separated God from the world, and left the law as the only means of communication with Him, the thought of Jesus saw God working everywhere in nature and in life. His presence and care are realised with a fulness that even St. Paul could not reach, and it is worth while to contrast the teaching of Master and disciple in a single significant passage: "Doth God show care for oxen?" asks St. Paul. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father," is the teaching of Jesus. Everywhere is to be seen the Father-God, whether in the outward world or in the depths of the human soul. It is this one thought that forms the basis of all the teaching, whether in regard to power in life, to hope and courage in life, to gifts in life, to sin and forgiveness, to all the dealings of man with God or man with man. The disciples are to regard themselves as members of one family, related to God as children to a father, who only gives good gifts to them that ask Him. While this ideal of sonship—"that ye may be the children of your Father"; "be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"—becomes the final motive of all loving action, extending even to the ungrateful and the unworthy.

Nor was this pervading faith in God's love merely the superficial view of an optimistic nature. It was tried amid all the storm and stress of suffering and of life. To the very last, in spite of all contrary seeming, it is still clung to and maintained, and in the hour of deepest anguish the word used is still "Abba, Father," the evangelist seeming to dwell upon the original utterance as upon a precious memory, to which he would here give its full significance. There are indications of like stress and trial upon other occasions, as perhaps on that of the

retirement to the desert upon the tidings of the death of St. John the Baptist. But the great faith in the Fatherhood of God never wavers. It was the foundation of Jesus' whole system, and it was a foundation deeply laid and hardly tested.

We might perhaps have expected that such a belief would lead to a more indulgent view of the government of the world than had been given in the old Jewish teaching. As a matter of fact the exact opposite is the case. So far from there being any weakening of the sense of sin or guilt, the horror of these is infinitely increased in the light in which they are now shown. For the God against whom every offence is committed is no longer seen as One who separates Himself from the unclean and is concerned with them as little as a righteous Jew would be. Rather He is a God of infinite condescension and infinite love: He extends His care even to those who are evil, debtors, sinners: He seeks the lost: His angels rejoice over the repentant, and, like the father of the prodigal son, He Himself sees the penitent while they are yet a great way off. In proportion to the greatness of this love, the more terrible appears its rejection and the wilful neglect of its commands. For not one of those commands is merely arbitrary: they are one and all the direct expression of God's nature, so that to neglect them is at once to sever oneself from God. The moral code, as Jesus taught it, is simply the declaration of God's love and care for men. Even the Sabbath is seen as no mere arbitrary ordinance, but an ordinance of love, "made for man," so that its true observance is an observance of love and includes the service of other men. Love to God and service to God as the Father are wholly impossible apart from the love and service of those whom God loves as His children. It is His will that "not one of these little ones should

perish," so that to act against them, or to fail to act for them, is to incur the grave peril of severing oneself from God and His loving will. Sin thus appears not merely as an offence against God's law: it is the direct act of severance from God's love. The sense of guilt is the sense of having incurred such separation: "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." When once the true nature of sin is realised, the vehemence of Jesus' warnings against lack of charity is fully explained. In His view the idea of God as the supreme moral force is inseparably bound up with the idea of God as a Father. Sin is the practical denial of that faith which inevitably worketh by love, and the end of sin is that outer darkness which typifies severance from the love of God.

In Jesus' view of the government of the world there is nothing superficial, nothing merely indulgent. In spite of suffering, in spite of the reality of sin and failure the belief in God's fatherhood must be maintained. For Jesus, as for the Church that followed Him, the broad view of the world as under this loving governance is the source of all life and all achievement. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to them that believe." "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, then should ye say to this mountain, be thou plucked up and be thou planted in the midst of the sea, and it should obey you." In this and other passages equally paradoxical it is clear that the detailed promise is not to be taken literally: the idea is that one who rested securely in the loving power of God would see all things granted so far as might be expedient. The whole teaching in regard to prayer is governed by this conception of faith. The efficacy of prayer is not to be measured by the granting or refusal of some particular request: rather must we take the wider view, and consider that he who prays in faith

at once sets himself in harmony with the will of God and has the power of that will upon his side. "Believe that ye receive your requests and ye shall receive them." "Shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Without dealing with the miracles in detail, it may be noticed how many of them are dependent upon the existence or restoration of a state of faith in the subject. "Be not afraid, only believe"; "According to thy faith be it unto thee"; "How is it that ye have no faith?" While sometimes, in addition to this belief in the power and love of God, the faith needed is shown as a belief in Jesus as representing that power and love: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" We may add that this faith in Jesus is intimately bound up with conduct: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"

This view of faith as representing the attitude of the whole soul to God and imparting an entirely new character to life is essential to any understanding of the kingdom of God in all its manifold presentation in Jesus' teaching. Sometimes that kingdom appears as the highest good for the individual soul: the treasure hid in a field, the pearl of great price, only to be secured by diligent and unwavering devotion. Sometimes it is the great reward of life in a sense wholly different to anything imagined by contemporary Jewish thought. In the wide spiritual region to which we are here conducted the proportional payment for separate services is inconceivable—as inconceivable in fact as the estimate of prayer according to the attainment of the particular request. The coming of the kingdom into the heart is in fact its own reward, whether it come after one hour's labour or after the burden and heat of the day. The particular service and its reward are lost in a vast ideal view. And when all is said there can be no talk of merit. The standard of perfection is infinitely high, and when we have done our best to

approach to it we remain unprofitable servants. Everything connected with the blessings of the kingdom is the gift of God, who may do what He will with His own. Something is due to man's own effort: the violent take the kingdom by force; but on the other hand such allusions as "for the elect's sake" (Matt. xxiv. 22) suggest the contrast between personal effort and imparted grace that has always been present to religious thought: only, as Jesus taught, faith itself solves all such difficulties: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

From this view of the kingdom as a state of the individual soul we pass to the view of it as a society made up of those who enjoy that state. The two views are not kept distinct, but some of the parables and illustrations incline to one, some to the other, while some combine the two. It has been a matter of dispute as to how far and in what sense Jesus in His teaching in regard to the kingdom of God looked forward to the establishment of the Church as an organised society. The actual term ἐκκλησία is found ascribed to Him only in two passages from St. Matthew's Gospel, the authority of both of which many critics are inclined to suspect. There can be no doubt that it was His purpose to gather round Him a band of followers enjoying the blessings of the kingdom themselves, and making it their duty, at whatever risk of unpopularity and danger, to extend those blessings to others: they are to be the salt of the earth: the leaven leavening the lump. On the other hand, in attempting to determine any question of contemplated organisation there are certain points that must constantly be kept in view. There is strong reason to suppose that Jesus did not specially direct the attention of His followers towards any distant future. The followers, at any rate, looked for a speedy establishment of the kingdom and an

immediate return of Jesus Himself. And even were it not so, is it not clear that any such detailed instruction in organisation would have been wholly alien to the general spirit of the teaching? Rather would such instruction appear to lie among the things that would be added to those who sought first the kingdom of God, together with a right judgment upon the details of politics and of social life. The teaching in this respect is marked by extraordinary judgment and reserve; there is the fullest and most profound guidance in principle, combined with a freedom in regard to detail that allows for the possibility of growth in every variety of circumstance. Once let the true principle be accepted, and all else will flow from it as naturally as water from the spring.

Was the kingdom present or future? Was it of this world, or of that which is to come? The solution to such questions again will only be found if we keep the general point of view constantly in mind. Parables like those of the mustard seed or the leaven, or the seed that grows in secret, represent the spread of the kingdom as a process whether in the world or in the individual heart. Parables like those of the draw-net or the wheat and tares—both of which, like the term ἐκκλησία, occur only in the Gospel of St. Matthew, imply a society existing not in a pure ideal state, but under the confusion and difficulty of earthly conditions. Sometimes, as at the beginning of the ministry, the kingdom is proclaimed as at hand; sometimes it is regarded as already present: the poor already possess it: there is no need to pay regard when we are called to look for it here or there, "for the kingdom of God is within you."

In all this there is no real ambiguity or contradiction when once we take our stand at what is everywhere the main point of view. There may be religious progress for

the individual soul: there may be a spread of the kingdom among the mass of mankind culminating in its triumphant revelation at the return of the Son of Man: but in the kingdom itself there is no change nor progress, any more than there is change or progress in the Being and Character of God. The kingdom is God's: its members are God's, and they are His unchangeably and for ever.

It is this final thought that in all Jesus' teaching illumines the mystery that surrounds man's final destiny. Membership of the kingdom and life appear in that teaching as practically identical. "To have life," "to inherit life," "the righteous into life eternal": in all such cases "life" and "the kingdom" are seen to be indistinguishable, and we may add in regard to the last instance that the word eternal is almost superfluous. "Life," as the term is used in all these passages, really means "life eternal." It was in fact inconceivable that the relationship of son and Father as Jesus saw it existing between man and God should be terminated by death. The human physical relationships were bound to change with the change from "this world" to "that"—"in that world they neither marry nor are given in marriage"—but the love combined with the power of God must make the relationship to Him an unending one. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And we should notice that it is the relationship of God to each individual soul that is viewed as thus persisting: the mention of the individual names makes that much clear. It is this certain permanence of relationship between God and the individual that furnishes the underlying idea of the resurrection alike for Jesus and for His followers.

It has been asked how far Jesus looked beyond the limits of His own nation for the spread of the kingdom. There are indications that He at first occupied Himself

solely with His own people. There are twelve apostles following the number of the twelve tribes, and they are sent not to the world at large, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. On the other hand, the idea of the kingdom as Jesus taught it contained in itself the germs of universality. The fatherhood of Abraham was as nothing in comparison with the fatherhood of God claimed by the inward man. Such experiences as that with the Syro-Phœnician woman, or that with the centurion of Capernaum, would be sufficient to reveal the universal capacity of mankind for faith, and at the end the confining barriers are broken down: the gospel is to be preached in all the world.

Without entering into detail, enough has been said to indicate in its general features the character of the kingdom of God as Jesus conceived it. We pass now to consider His ideas of His own relationship to that kingdom. Here, once more, as in the case of the ethical Law or the kingdom of God or the nature of God, an existing conception is grasped in its deepest sense and fused into unity with the rest of the teaching by a marvellous power of thought. Just as it is impossible to separate the moral teaching of the kingdom from the teaching in regard to God, so is it impossible to separate either of these from Jesus' teaching as to His own person. As Harnack has so profoundly said: "Jesus revealed the kingdom of God as future and present, as visible and invisible: invisible and yet visible, for they saw Him."

There is no need to deal at any length with the Messianic expectations of the time; they belong to the subject of another essay in this series. Suffice it to say that an impartial consideration of the earliest authorities for Jesus' life can leave us with no doubt as to His claim to fulfil those expectations, in however unexpected a sense, or of His intention to reveal the

scattered rays of Messianic thought as united in His own person. Here, as elsewhere, He moves among existing ideas with the greatest freedom, selecting and combining those that best express His own religious experience. What is important to notice is that the personal experience is prior to the adoption of the pre-existent ideas; the choice among these is everywhere conditioned by the experience.

The revelation to others of Jesus' conception of His person and mission is clearly shown by the synoptic records to have been progressive. From the first there is the authoritative tone of the teaching, the claim of the new prophet to fulfil the message of the teachers of old time: "I say unto you." There is also an authority exercised against the powers that oppose the spread of the kingdom of goodness and happiness: "With authority He commandeth the unclean spirits." There is the personal invitation with its accompanying promise: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There is the claim to lead: "One is your master, one is your guide, and all ye are brethren." But in the current state of Jewish thought a certain reticence was necessary if any real work was to be accomplished, and a consideration of the titles applied to Jesus in these gospels makes the nature of that reticence, as well as the significance of the titles, abundantly clear. We may consider them in order of importance.

Son of David,—this was a title of long Messianic association. It is never used by Jesus of Himself. It is the popular title for the new teacher given to Him by the crowd or by someone praying for His help. There is an obvious reason for this. The premature adoption of this title would have led to immediate misapprehension and confusion. The conception of the Messiah was to be transformed, and there is constantly present to Jesus'

mind the fear that the lower classes, taking Him to be the Messiah in the accepted sense of the term, might put Him forward as head of a popular national movement akin to those mentioned by Gamaliel in the Acts. There are even some who are inclined to doubt the Davidic descent of Jesus entirely as a historical fact, and to see in the interview with the scribes—"How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord?"—an attempt of Jesus to remove the popular idea of the necessity of Davidic descent for the Messiah, or to suggest that the passages referring to it could only be understood in a purely spiritual sense. At any rate, the title of Son of David is kept in the background.

The favourite title is that of Son of Man. To Jesus' ordinary hearers this might be, and to a large extent no doubt was, a perfectly colourless title without Messianic associations. That it was so would seem to have been due to an accident of language. For if we retranslate the phrase *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*—Son of Man—into Aramaic, the phrase thus obtained would carry with it no more special sense than the words "one," "a man," "man," in English. Thus the title would at first suggest the idea of simple manhood, without rank or distinction. No doubt Jesus Himself used the title with Messianic intention from the first, deriving it probably from that same portion of the Book of Daniel from which, as we have suggested, He may have borrowed the conception of the kingdom—"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven: and there was given Him a kingdom," etc. (Dan. vii. 13, 14). So general, however, was the term that only gradually did the disciples come to realise its Messianic sense, and more gradually still the common people. This great and precious title, whose very lowliness is its greatest dignity, and which we may suppose Jesus to have selected as

emphasising His relationship to the whole human race as its head and representative, was in fact the chief mystery of the kingdom of God given gradually to the disciples to know, but to others in parables. Under it Jesus chose to veil His consciousness that He was Himself the Messiah, the inevitable and necessary centre of the new kingdom, as Daniel and the prophets had foreseen it.

We have no space to study the uses of this title in detail; a few significant facts may be mentioned. Its usages will, as a rule, be found to follow the general lines of the teaching in regard to the kingdom of God. Sometimes the kingdom is viewed as in process of being established, and the title, Son of Man, obviously refers to Jesus as He labours on earth for its establishment: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"; "The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister." As Son of Man Jesus claims to reinterpret the ancient law in accordance with the general conditions of the new kingdom: "The Son of Man is lord also of the Sabbath." As Son of Man He proclaims the state of forgiveness existing in the kingdom: "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." It is to be noticed that the opponents do not discover in these words an immediate claim to Messiahship, but only a blasphemous human utterance, while at the same time they ignore the essential condition of faith in the subject of the miracle. The work of the spread of the kingdom, with all its suffering, is to be undertaken for the Son of Man's sake. Sometimes, on the other hand, the kingdom is viewed in the light of its final establishment, and in these cases the title Son of Man is used in a more obvious Messianic sense, but with less pointed and necessary reference to Jesus Himself: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed

when He shall come in His glory"; "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds," etc. The former of these two passages is very noticeable and probably very characteristic; the identification between the Son of Man and the speaker is not necessary, though it must ultimately have become clear. The revelation of the kingdom in its intimate relation to the personality of the teacher was constantly carried forward under this ambiguous title, until the full significance of the relation was announced to the disciples at the notable interview at Cæsarea Philippi, where, according to St. Mark, the Messiahship at any rate was recognised by Peter, speaking on behalf of the other disciples, "Thou art the Christ"; and where, according to St. Matthew, the title of Son of Man was brought into relation with that of Messiah and Son of God: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? . . . Whom say ye that I am? Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It is this last that is the culminating title of the revelation. It is true that this title, like the others, was an old one; it had been applied to Israel, as the first-begotten son of God; it had been applied also, as in Psalm ii., to convey a special promise of protection to Israel's king, "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee." It is true also that Jesus in the synoptic gospels never uses the full phrase Son of God in reference to Himself. On the other hand, expressions like "the Son" and "my Father," interpreted with reference to the synoptic teaching as a whole, make the nature of the claim expressed by the title perfectly clear. As "the Son" Jesus claimed to stand in a closer and more intimate relation to the Father-God than did any of His followers; they are brethren; He is not merely their brother, but their master and guide, and He is this in virtue of His unique position and the fact that He possesses a more perfect knowledge

of the Father and of the Father's will than is theirs. The classical passage is that recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke, drawing from some common source: "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Even if that passage were rejected on the ground that it does not occur in St. Mark, there would still be ample evidence of the currency of the title, though none, perhaps, so clear of its significance It was, we are told, applied to Jesus by the spirits of evil: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God?" "The unclean spirits cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." It is suggested in its unique character in the parable of the husbandmen, "Having yet, therefore, one son, his well-beloved." It is, as we have seen, finally accepted by the disciples at Cæsarea Philippi.

It would be impossible to define all that this title implied. We may, however, say without hesitation that its use was not inconsistent with the idea of a complete dependence upon God. In knowledge, for instance, Jesus regards Himself as inferior to the Father, though the superior of angels and of men: "Of that day and of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father." He appears as liable to temptation: "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations;"[1] while the saying, "There is none good but one, that is God," would seem to point to the consciousness in Jesus that while subject to the conditions of human life and conflict He is inferior to God, who alone has goodness as an assured possession. On the other hand there is much to show that this was regarded as only temporary; presently the moral victory would be complete, and He

[1] St. Luke xxii. 28. *οἱ διαμεμενηκότες μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου.* Perhaps "trying" or "proving" comes nearer the true meaning than "temptation" in our modern sense: but cf. pp. 138, 139.

would return as judge in the glory of the Father with the holy angels.

It was this claim to unique sonship that led finally to death. At the trial the High Priest asked the definite question, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and Jesus said, "I am." The claim was at once regarded as blasphemous, and was certain to be so regarded. In this same interview with the disciples at Cæsarea Philippi the certainty of a fatal termination following upon this claim is faced and accepted, and the necessity of a suffering Messiah, so alien to all contemporary thought, is for the first time clearly revealed.

It has been doubted whether this idea of suffering was present to Jesus from the first. Passages like that referring to the sorrow of the children of the bridechamber at the departure of the bridegroom may suggest that it was. At any rate, once it was realised that the idea of a Messianic claim, founded solely upon the sense of supreme spiritual sonship to God, ran counter to all those national hopes which were bound up with a material triumph, death would be seen as bound to follow its open proclamation. There could, however, be no desertion of so important a position, and death itself under such circumstances is accepted as the will of God. There is apparently a temptation to put aside the idea of a suffering Messiah, but when Peter gives expression to it he is met with the sternest of rebukes. "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." The old conception of an earthly Messianic kingdom was but the result of a narrow, human view; the new conception which saw the true life of the Messiah in the life of meekness and of service, perfected by a death brought about by devotion to the duty of revealing the highest truth in the message, was derived from God Himself. The language of the rebuke

to Peter inevitably reminds us of the rebukes to Satan in the story which prefaces the opening of the public ministry, where there is represented to have been a similar temptation to take false views of the Messianic destiny. The point here insisted upon was, in fact, of the utmost importance. The peculiar authority of the message depended upon the claim to peculiar sonship. Apart from the peculiar intimacy of sonship revealed by the religious consciousness of Jesus, His teaching, whether in regard to the will of God, or the new gospel of the kingdom, or His own person, would be bereft of all its force. Loyalty to this consciousness led, as He saw, almost inevitably to suffering and to death.

Certain lines of thought closely connected with this must here be briefly mentioned, to be resumed in some cases at greater length in connection with the teaching of St. John. In the first place it is clearly seen that for such a life of obedience, perfected by such a death, there could be no thought of severance from God at any point. The continued personal existence was, as we have shown, involved for Jesus in the conception of God's Fatherhood, and the resurrection was apparently necessarily implied.

Closely following on this came the conviction and the promise of His own continued presence with the Church: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

In the third place we must here allude to the passage which speaks of that perfect life of service as a ransom, more especially as the words would seem to have been often misunderstood: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." A consideration of the context makes the meaning of λύτρον fairly clear. There is apparently no thought of the redemption of the forfeit souls of men as the result of an exchange such as we find in 1 Timothy ii. 6,

where the word is noticeably ἀντίλυτρον, or in 2 Corinthians v. 21: "He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin." Such ideas, though they may not be far removed from Jesus' thought, are yet probably a later development and not contained in the original expression. The emphasis here is upon the idea of release, not of exchange. The personal life is regarded as lost in service, and it is so lost with the view of winning many from the life of sin and selfishness to the life of service and ministry in obedience to God's will. Mankind are as slaves, who are to be delivered through the devoted life and example of Jesus into the free life of sacrifice in the kingdom of God. The life lost is the life won; the yoke of Jesus is in reality the easy yoke, and at the same time, as many have realised, the life of complete personal sacrifice is the only "loosing-price" for other men. It is a thought that may be paralleled from the Gospel of St. John: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

The same idea of redemption underlies the words used at the institution of the Eucharist: "This is My blood of the new testament which is shed for many." In order really to live in God's kingdom men must be won to the life of loving sacrifice. The blood shed by Jesus in proof of the consummation of sacrifice in His own person is shed to win men to this, and at the same time ratifies the new covenant of love between God and man. In St. Matthew's Gospel the words, "for the remission of sins," have been added; they are probably of the nature of a comment, expanding what is implied in the earlier form. For it would seem as if in the thought of Jesus for those who attained through Him to the life and love of the kingdom of God, forgiveness of sins at once followed from the love of God, whose will it is that not one of these little ones should perish. The love of God is there—a perfect love;

the proof of union with that on the human stage is the devotion of the life to the love of men in faithfulness even unto death. That proof Jesus had given in perfect obedience and sinlessness; sin being the act of selfish rebellion against God's will for the good of men, the practical denial of the belief in love. It was for others to strive after the same devotion of heart and life in the same unfaltering faith, but, as it was Jesus' life alone that perfectly revealed the way, so, as sin-laden generations soon came to feel, testing their lives by His standard, it was to His life alone that mankind dared appeal in presence of God.

Finally there followed upon this revelation of the necessity of suffering, with the certainty of apparent failure, a more developed picture of the circumstances of the return and the triumphant establishment of the kingdom. The gaze is more and more frequently diverted from the suffering of the present to the power and glory of the future. Close upon the Messianic claim before the chief priest, involving the certainty of suffering and death, there follows the prophecy of ultimate triumph. "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This return is to be the signal for a general resurrection in full accordance with contemporary Jewish thought, and in this respect, as in all its details, it is connected with the main idea of God and His unfailing care: "Shall not God avenge His own elect?"

In regard to the exact time, though Jesus says that the day and hour were unknown to Him or to any but the Father, yet there is strong reason to suppose that the early Church based its expectation of a speedy return upon certain points in Jesus' own teaching. It is sufficient to refer to such passages as Mark ix. 1, or Mark xiii. 30: "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass

till all these things be done"; though it is possible that there has here been some misunderstanding, and that expressions which were originally intended to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem have been subsequently interpreted as predictions of the approaching end of the world.[1] Whenever it took place, this coming of the kingdom of God with power would involve a judgment held by the Messiah in presence of God and of the holy angels; at this judgment there would be an apportionment of rewards in accordance with deeds, and in the parable of the sheep and the goats we are shown a reward of goodness in itself, even when performed in ignorance of the relation of all acts of charity to the person of Christ. A new point is added to this parable if we regard the gathered nations as including especially the Gentile world.

The Church early associated the return of Jesus with earthly portents and catastrophes. It is not easy to decide how much of the short apocalypse contained in our synoptic gospels is due to Jesus Himself, how much to His expectant followers in a portentous time. Here, if anywhere, we might expect some lack of clearness in transmission, some blending of old with new; possibly even some wisdom after the event. The question remains to be decided, and is perhaps not of great importance. In its general features the character of the kingdom of heaven beyond the grave depends on the same ideas as on earth; the colours are drawn from earthly experience suitable to the audiences addressed, but the central thought is still that of fellowship with God, secured in obedience to His will through fellowship with men.

The same service, the same faithfulness, the same obedience even unto death are to be characteristic of the

[1] It may be that the fourth gospel has preserved the true sense, and that the original reference was to the immediate coming and continued presence of the Spirit: cf. pp. 164, 165.

followers as of the master; and in this sense the whole teaching would seem to have been summed up in the institution of the Last Supper. Whatever else it may have been, that institution became a symbol to Jesus' followers of their brotherhood and union one with another in a life that in its essence was not theirs, but His. In that simple act of common worship are to be found all the main ideas that we have had before us. The new law of mutual love, the new kingdom, the new revelation of God in a fresh and loving covenant of mercy ratified in the outpoured blood; the commemoration of that life which consummated its work of sacrifice in the breaking of the body in death; finally the passover thought of a great deliverance—all these meet in that great and simple rite, the depth of whose symbolism the wisest cannot fathom, though the humblest may find comfort in its simplicity, as in all the words of the teaching, so elementary, so adequate to all that life or death could bring.

And with this mention of the institution of the Eucharist we pass to a new division of our subject. There is a teaching of act as well as of word, and it is infinitely more subtle and by consequence more difficult to forge. A single incident, narrated by all the synoptic writers, may be quoted as typical. "He came to Capernaum, and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace, for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And He sat down and called the twelve and said unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all. And He took a little child and set him in the midst of them; and when He had taken him in His arms He said unto them: Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child he shall not enter therein." At once we say of the action that He alone could have

done it. Across the bitterness of the dispute He passes as He is said to have passed across the stormy sea. The friendship is restored and the atmosphere in which alone love and friendship are possible. It is the lesson of the natural beauty of a loved and happy child untouched by prejudice or jealousy or passion. We may call it the return to nature—the perfect nature of man that is perfect love. It is the teaching of the Golden Age, the early sinless world, the true kingdom of heaven and of God. The few symbolic acts that have been recorded all carry with them this same enforcement of the spirit of love combined with the complete negation of self. More clearly than anything else, they allow us an insight into the spirit and life of Jesus and His society.

It is here, perhaps, that a consideration of the significance of Christ's miracles may most fittingly be introduced. The time is past when Christianity could be presented as a revelation attested by miracles, depending on these for the main evidence of its truth. For a while these were the wall that formed the chief bulwark of the city; to-day the defences are placed far up on the surrounding hills, wholly unmarked by unobservant eyes, but infinitely more subtle and more strong. At the same time, though no longer of defensive value, the ancient walls still stand, lending a peculiar character and aspect to the city that they once protected.

With the spread of the area of scientific uniformity—the space within which general laws, without exception, are found to hold—it became inevitable that the evidence required to carry conviction in regard to supposed exceptions should be very strong, beyond all suspicion of error in observation or transmission. And that, perhaps, is what we must say, however reluctantly, our present historical records, even on the most favourable view, do not give us. And to say this is not, as it has too often

been the foolish habit to assert, to disparage in the smallest degree the general reliability or faithfulness of our writers. It is with them as with us. What to-day appears a miracle may to-morrow be an explained scientific phenomenon — the man then who presents it to-day, as it appeared to him, as a wholly isolated and unexplained phenomenon outside the ordinary course of nature, is not discredited as a witness because to-morrow his miracle is found to be but an instance of some wider law; nor again is one who, in an age uncritical about such matters, follows the tendency of his age in readily attaching miraculous occurrences to a remarkable personality, thereby discredited in all respects because a later age finds itself constrained to be critical. In one direction there has necessarily been progress, in another there may have been none. The critical eye for character has been but little developed in nineteen hundred years; the critical eye for nature has been enormously sharpened within the last century, and it need not surprise us if there should be an acquiescence in the possibility of error in regard to the latter, while error in regard to the former is treated as absent.

At the same time, to revert to our simile, the element of miracle in the records remains an important structural feature, of which our city could not be deprived without material loss from a historical standpoint, though it no longer constitutes the main line of defence. In regard to miracle, as in regard to much else in life, a man sees what he is prepared to see, and of the majority of the miracles attributed to Jesus of Nazareth it must be admitted that they bear a marked prevailing character. It was in this light that the first Christian writers saw them, and it is this that leads us to discuss them at this point, side by side with acts of teaching, such as the setting of the little child in the midst, the genuineness of which few

critics, however late they might place our records, would be inclined to question or dispute.

As has been frequently pointed out, the bulk of the miracles of Jesus are in one form or another works of healing; that, too, appears to be the character of most of those works that our evangelists claim to pass over or leave unrecorded in detail. In regard to all such exceptional works of healing two points may be noticed. On the one hand, their improbability due to the weight of uniformity in the opposing scale must to-day be regarded as inevitably demanding a counterbalancing weight of testimony; on the other hand, we must remember that the tendency of the progress of science of late years has been to diminish the degree of certainty with which we can fix limits to the action of mind on body, particularly in the case of certain obviously neurotic diseases, while in the present instance the personality, always an important factor in such matters, is confessedly of a wholly exceptional order and power. On such a view many of the so-called miracles cease to be miracles in the strict sense, passing within the range of phenomena unexplained to-day, to be naturally explained to-morrow, but they do not therefore cease to be signs. That this power of will—this "virtue"—should have been exercised so widely for the removal of suffering is the striking fact, and thus these miracles, as they are recorded, may be taken to form part of that teaching by act, revealing personality, which forms so certain a part of our records. In their prevailing tendency, at any rate, the miracles throw light upon the character as the writers conceived it.

The supreme miracles of restoration from death to life belong to the same category; our ultimate attitude towards them will depend upon our ultimate view of the evidence, but upon any conclusion to which we may be driven they

will continue to represent the writer's conception of a character—its compassion, and its will to save.

There remain miracles that it is not easy to explain or to bring under any general view, many and ingenious as are the explanations that have been offered of them. Such perhaps are the transference of the devils to the Gadarene swine or the cursing of the barren fig tree. In regard to these a fuller knowledge of contemporary thought, especially of contemporary miracle cycles, might help us in forming a conclusion; meanwhile the question must remain one for history. The probability against such phenomena is very great; the possibility of their being introduced in perfectly good faith in an uncritical age, particularly into the life of One who had performed many real mighty works, is considerable. We may frame hypotheses about them and their presence in the narrative, but these cannot pretend to any certainty. And so in conclusion may we not suggest a certain perspective in dealing with this question? In the dim background these isolated, unexplained actions; nearer the foreground acts not inconsistent with the character and personality, but demanding more evidence for certainty than we could on any theory at present claim; finally, in the forefront those acts which were possibly the foundation of all the stories in a wondering age—acts of spiritual healing, many of them in no sense inconceivable to modern thought or modern science; these last bringing us back to those symbolic acts with which we started, and with them helping to reveal the true essence of the character and personality more clearly than any words.

There are, of course, those—and they are many—to whom this question presents itself in a wholly different way. For them the power of spiritual personality, gathering force like some great tidal wave, sweeps up over all material laws of evidence, changing all levels, carrying all before it, so that in its wake the resurrection appears as

easy to accept to-day as it was for the first disciples, and the other miracles *a fortiori*. That is a view with which, within the limits of our present discussion, we are not concerned. We would only point out, what all must realise, that only a conception of the personality, based on historical evidence, can render such views possible at all, while it is surely the part of those who hold them to bear with others who cannot halt where they have halted on the road of historical investigation, or who stumble where they firmly tread.

The first part of our inquiry is at an end. We have reviewed the teaching of Jesus as it is recorded in the best authenticated documents. We have grouped that teaching under certain of its general and most important ideas: the new righteousness, the kingdom of God, the Fatherhood of God, the doctrines of Sonship, and of the Messiah. We have seen in the case of all of these that the teaching was not wholly new; in the case of each a basis was to be found in previous thought; in a sense, the teaching of Jesus was but the goal of a long course of progress, the culmination of a slow development. We have even seen in regard to certain doctrines a possibility of progress in the mind of Jesus Himself. And if we now turn back to the point at which we started—the isolated aphorism, the unsystematic presentation, the occasional act, we find ourselves enabled to regard all that isolation, lack of system, contradiction even, as in reality a complete and perfect system—a system in which no part of the teaching stands alone, but each and every idea, whether borrowed from the past or not, is here perfectly absorbed and intimately related to every other. The new righteousness, the kingdom of God, the Fatherhood of God—none of these can be understood without reference to all the rest; none of them has any meaning apart from the consciousness and personality of the teacher. If we have momen-

tarily divided up the teaching for purposes of investigation, yet division is really impossible; of their own accord the fragments come together into a complete and organic whole. It is the presence of the personality that we are made to feel throughout; that we could perhaps have been made to feel by no other mode of presentation than this which seems so much the result of chance. Even the author of the fourth gospel, however much he may have gained for us in other directions, has yet lost something from the purely historical standpoint in the attempt to be systematic. No teaching, no system that has ever been given to the world was ever so much the product of the whole man as was that of Jesus. There is in it a great system, the result of free and profound criticism on the past, the result of fresh and independent observation on the present, and yet so entirely, so absolutely is the personality of the teacher fused with the teaching, that it was to Him that men turned, of Him that they wrote, for Him rather than for any special truth that He had formulated that they were content to suffer and to die. Strange surely is it that, when we turn outside the gospels to the other writings of His followers, scarcely a saying is recorded as His, scarcely a doctrine is formally assigned to Him. Here and there an isolated utterance—"It is more blessed to give than to receive";[1] here and there some obvious reminiscence of His words, as in the Epistle of St. James or the First Epistle of St. Peter; but quite early to all these writers the Personality of the Master and its continuance became of more importance than any isolated doctrine or portion of His system. As far as these writers are concerned, we are left to recover such details as best we may, and when we have endeavoured to do this we can but pronounce that the instinct of these early followers was wholly right: the living Christ is more than any system.

[1] Acts xx. 35.

So far we have sought to follow a strictly historical line We have divided our authorities. We have chosen to abide for our conclusions by those who are considered by competent critics to be the earliest and most reliable, and for the most part we have rested upon the earliest among these. We now pass to consider the position and importance of the fourth gospel for the purposes of our investigation. This is not the place to go into any elaborate considerations of date or authorship. It is sufficient to say that on no view could this gospel be regarded as precisely on a level with the other three. The opening verses would be sufficient to indicate the difference even to the most uncritical mind. Here in a sense unknown to the other evangelists we have reached a reflective stage of thought: the facts have been selected, the teaching formulated, the details related to a central idea. The comparison of the opening verses of St. Luke with those of St. John gives an obvious and simple key to the difference, and St. Luke may be taken merely to have expressed what was in fact a common purpose among the synoptists.

What then are we to say of the position and value of the Gospel of St. John? We have reached a point most suitable for the consideration of this problem. For with St. John, if we suppose the gospel to have been by him, it is as though, looking back at the end of a long life at all that had been written and taught about his Master, he were afraid that the secret of it all might yet be lost, and so beyond all question he will make it clear. It is possible that our synoptic records were before him,[1] and that it was his wish or purpose to supplement these. He has certainly in view the general tendency of the Christian thought of his time, with its liability to wander off upon side issues or cross ways far from the only road.

[1] ZAHN, *Einleitung*, ii. 499; MOFFAT, *Hist. N. T.*, 492; WEISS, *Einl.*, 569.

"Locutus est multa, sed prope omnia de caritate," says St. Augustine in his commentary on St. John. *Caritas*, ἀγάπη—that is almost his only theme; and it is so, not for itself, but because that term brought him nearest to that with which he was alone concerned: the living personality, present in every utterance and every act, making it a matter of little moment whether the record were enshrined in books that the world could scarce contain, or in a small and carefully edited treatise. That was the real answer to the nascent heresies of the time. There was no need to combat them in word: it was sufficient to set over against them the living personality with its prevailing characteristics or what might best express them. There has, of course, been editing, arrangement, selection; there may even be something of the nature of comment: but in relation to the whole system of teaching St. John neither adds to nor detracts from what has been furnished by the other evangelists, nor is he concerned to do so. The law, the kingdom of God, the fatherhood of God, the doctrine of the Messiah, and the person of Christ—all these are there as they are here. Only here more vividly and more consciously the personality of the teacher is set in relation to them, and obviously made to combine them in a manner unknown to the previous writers. The Gospel of St. John is of the nature of a commentary, but the comments are, as we feel, all really drawn from the works of the original author. The other evangelists may furnish us with a larger body of facts: St. John gives us the only clue as to the method of viewing them. And if such be in any sense a true account of the matter, it is obvious that the question of date and authorship becomes comparatively unimportant. The conclusion above suggested need not be materially altered if criticism should ultimately compel us to abandon the theory of Johannine authorship. Even

if not by St. John, the gospel yet embodies the traditional view of the Church, which we might, or might not, have gathered from the synoptic writers, that the Personality of Jesus remains of more importance than any isolated act or utterance. Whether it be St. John or another, "Locutus est multa, sed prope omnia de caritate," and in the general tradition of the Church, on this point at least infallible, ἀγάπη, charity, love, stood forth as the nearest approach to a general expression for that living personality which in living had revealed God and the Spirit of the World.

We do not for an instant deny that much is gained if the gospel can be shown to be of St. John's own writing. No one approaching the subject from the historical standpoint could disparage the testimony of an eye-witness of the events described; only the important fact to keep before us is that even on the failure to establish its Johannine authorship the book does not cease to be historical. Its facts were probably drawn from the same common stock as those of the synoptists, and in general character agree with theirs, while the great unifying idea had been more or less consciously present in the society from the first.

The main difference between this gospel and the others is one that relates to the Person of Jesus, or, as we should perhaps rather say, is to be found in the different account here given of Jesus' own revelation of the doctrine of His Person. In the other gospels we have seen Jesus' revelation of His work and Person represented as a gradual process. This does not in the least necessarily involve the supposition of a development in Jesus' own ideas in this regard. There is strong evidence for the view that from the earliest commencement of the public ministry, and probably long before, there had been present to Jesus' consciousness the idea not merely of the long-

expected kingdom of God as the eternal kingdom of God's spiritual children, but also of Himself as the supreme representative of spiritual sonship to God, and therefore the inevitable centre of the kingdom, answering to the Jewish expectation of the Messiah, without whom the kingdom of God among men would not have been and could not be. The sense of supreme sonship to God formed, as we have seen, the basis of all other claims. Jesus regarded Himself as the Son of Man most closely related to God: therefore He was the head of the kingdom of the sons of men who desire to become sons of God—the true Messiah of the true Israel. There may have been development in detail: the realisation of the necessity of suffering for the perfecting of His work, with all that it implied, may only have been borne in upon Him in the course of a bitter experience of rejection by His own people, but there is nothing in the synoptic records to indicate any uncertainty in Jesus' own mind from the first as to the cardinal ideas of divine sonship and spiritual Messiahship.

On the other hand, with regard to the revelation of all this to others, there can be no doubt that the true view is that which represents this as gradual, and which sees the life's work as one of slow preparation leading up to a final revelation in the great scene at Cæsarea Philippi. Even apart from any view as to the value of the records, such an account would strike us as being in harmony with all the ordinary conditions of human life. Only gradually would it be possible for Jesus to reveal His conception of the kingdom of God as a spiritual society and of His own spiritual relation to it to His most intimate disciples, and more gradually still to the common people. Even at Cæsarea Philippi we see that there was a danger of misapprehension not merely from the world at large, but among the disciples themselves: only so can we explain

the stern rebuke to St. Peter, and the strict injunctions as to secrecy. There was apparently a real danger that the populace might seek to make Jesus a king by force, and thus cause His death to bear for all time a character wholly different from that which it now actually bears, appearing, as it would have done, as the result of an unwarrantable intrusion upon things that were Cæsar's, instead of what it really was, and what it now must always appear, a death solely brought about by loyalty to His own deepest consciousness of truth.

The final revelation was necessarily gradual, but, when once that revelation had been given, it was inevitable that the whole past life should be viewed in the light of it, changing in colour and in character as a landscape changes with or without the sun. The revelation once given and pondered over, as we must remember, in hours of long regret, the view that it involved and no other became the important one to portray for all the world to see and know. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name."

The simple tradition of the facts of the life remained, but side by side with that the final revelation with all that it involved was winning its way gradually to a position of supreme importance. On the main issue there is no contradiction between the gospels. The other evangelists are all more or less affected by a tendency which culminates in the fourth, as when St. Matthew views everything with reference to prophecy and the Jewish expectation of the Messiah; only in St. John's Gospel not merely is Jesus all that He is to the others, but He is that from the very first to St. John the Baptist and to the disciples. When once we realise that this change was natural and inevitable, it becomes easy to allow for it in regard to small points of historical detail: in its main tendency

it represented, as we have shown, a true instinct and leads us by the only way.

For in fact the personality of Jesus was to the first disciples and is still the centre of the kingdom and of all the teaching. Take that away, and the significance of all the rest is lost. For them, however, as for us, it was a life's revelation leading gradually to a doctrine. And so when St. Mark represents this revelation as gradual, and St. John describes an immediate proclamation of Messiahship on the part of the Baptist and of Jesus Himself, there can be no question as to which view we shall choose. To the Church it came to seem inevitable that facts so obvious must have been recognised from the beginning, and we can understand the mistake of perspective in an uncritical age while accepting the truth of the judgment that it involves. And so again when in St. John the preaching of the kingdom fades into insignificance in comparison with the revelation of the doctrine of the Person of Jesus and the new life in Him, we shall none the less believe that it was with the existing ideas of righteousness and of the kingdom of God that the teaching began, in accordance with the whole tendency of that teaching and its appeal to known facts; the mode of interpretation of these old ideas and the authority of the handling leading only gradually, however inevitably, to the conception of the true character of the Teacher. Without a previous knowledge of the nature of the kingdom, the new idea of the Messiah could never have been grasped. Yet we must always remember that to those first disciples in actual presence of the Teacher the revelation of His Person was in fact granted day by day from the very first, and to give the sense of this is the aim of the fourth evangelist. "Locutus est multa, sed prope omnia de caritate." Side by side with the attempt which we have already noticed to express

the inner principle and spirit of the life, there is found quite naturally blended this developed revelation of the Person.

In view of the main point to be illustrated, the fourth evangelist has made careful choice among the facts of a wide tradition. The events described belong for the most part to a period subsequent to that selected for portrayal by the other evangelists. The discourses also, whatever their setting, would seem to be largely made up of sayings of a later date than the scene at Cæsarea Philippi: they are thus concerned not so much with disputes with the Pharisees affecting the interpretation of the law or the nature of righteousness as with the conflict with the priests at Jerusalem in regard to Jesus' Person and Messiahship. At the same time there would seem to be everywhere a conscious grouping of the sayings according to subject-matter rather than to circumstance. The fragmentary and occasional utterances have been fused by memory and reflection into the long discourse, and as a result we here miss to a large extent the spontaneity and sudden aptness which are so characteristic of the picture drawn by the other evangelists, and which so often lead us to say that, whatever the verdict in regard to this or that portion of the document, this saying or this act could only have been His. More and more does one come to feel that in this respect the synoptic account of the teaching-method is the true one, even when all allowance has been made for a more learned audience in these later days and for all that had to be brought together into the short space of these final charges to the chosen friends. It is to be noticed that the elaborately worked out parable, so dear to the common mind, is wholly absent from the fourth gospel, though the parabolic illustration and figurative mode of expression in the material images of common life is everywhere

retained. Probably no one would be found to doubt the genuineness of such illustrations as those of the Good Shepherd, the True Vine, the Light, the Way, the Living Water, the Father's House, and many more, though many might question the verbal accuracy of the report. The omission of all that apparently irrelevant detail, which we saw to be so important a feature of the genuine parable, is in itself a remarkable point of difference, though possibly to be explained to some extent by the change in the character of the audience. But in fact it is here as elsewhere with this gospel. Differences there are—due, it may be, to a change in the character of the audience, it may be, to a later date and points chosen for special emphasis—but when all is said, we still feel that the substantial fact is always there: in scenes like those with Nicodemus, or the woman of Samaria, or Martha and Mary, the record is in some sense the record of one who saw, whether that one were St. John or some other eye-witness whose experience became part of the common tradition of the Church.

It is the same with the main ideas of the teaching. In St. John, as in the other evangelists, the central doctrine of Jesus' teaching is the Fatherhood of God. Round this all else revolves. God is first known as the Father of Jesus Himself, in union with whom alone all His work is done, and whose love is the source of all His knowledge, life, and power. God is also the Father of all men, seeking men to worship Him as their Father in heaven, and as a Father certain to hear their prayers. He is also revealed as a spirit; He is living; He is holy, and as a holy Father His love grants holiness to men. "Holy Father, make them holy in the truth." Here, as in the other evangelists and in complete contrast with the tendencies of current thought, the idea is that of a God who is not far away, unconcerned with sinners, and to be won only by the

stern details of legal service, but rather of One whose holiness is so combined with love that His will is to impart it in the fullest measure to men, so that not one of them may perish, but all may come to the truth. It is the same love that in the parable in St. Luke's Gospel sees the lost son when he is still a great way off.

At the same time, we are bound to notice that side by side with this teaching there are to be found traces in this gospel of a different line of thought. In many passages the world is here represented as severed from God in a more complete and absolute sense than is known to the other evangelists, while even the most casual reader could hardly fail to notice that the tone of the great passage in the Sermon on the Mount, which speaks of the clothing of the lilies and of God's intimate and pervading care of the universe, is here absent. This is precisely one of those points that we may attribute to the general tendency of the book. In the other gospels God is shown as in a measure self-revealed in nature for those who have eyes to see, though the opening of men's eyes to see Him there may be Jesus' work. In the Gospel of St. John, as the emphasis is all upon the importance of this work of Jesus, God is less seen as revealed in nature, more as exclusively revealed in Him.

Closely bound up with the doctrine of God's Fatherhood is Jesus' claim to be the Son of God in a special and peculiar sense. We have already dwelt upon the passage from the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke which sums up this relationship: "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth what the Son is but the Father, and what the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal it." This thought is developed in the Gospel of St. John in infinite detail. In origin Jesus is from the Father. His Father knows Him, loves Him, gives Him knowledge, honour, and power;

while on the other hand He alone has seen the Father, and speaks what He has seen and heard from Him. The relationship is summed up in the statement, "I and My Father are one." His fellowship with God is felt by Jesus to be something so intimate that it does not begin with earthly birth or end with earthly death. Abraham rejoiced to see it, and it existed before Abraham and before the world. Death is for Jesus but going His way to Him who sent Him—a return to the eternal glory of the heavenly sonship.

It was this claim that formed the basis of the charge of blasphemy — a charge which on one occasion is characteristically met by Jesus by a quotation from the Old Testament. "The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken: say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God?" The name of "God" had been actually applied to those who received the divine revelation under the old dispensation. Why, then, should the title which He now chose be held to be blasphemous? The passage shows as clearly as any Jesus' view of His own sonship, as well as of that of His disciples. In fact, though He regards Himself as being the Son of God in a special sense, yet the disciples also are "of God"; they have God's word; the Father loves them, and will give them power and glory and complete union with Jesus and with Himself. "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."

From this peculiar consciousness of sonship flows the

consciousness of being the Messiah. As in the Synoptists the title of Son of Man is here used by Jesus with distinct Messianic intention, though we miss any gradual revelation of its significance such as we found in them. We have seen how Jesus would seem to have chosen this title to express His Messiahship, because He conceived of that office as involving His being the supreme representative of the race of men. But in this Gospel we are never allowed to approach the title from the purely human standpoint, or to lose sight of the heavenly origin and destiny. Son of Man though He was, He came down from heaven and had His life there; He gives men heavenly food; He will be lifted up to draw all men, but He will return to execute judgment.

In St. John, as in the other evangelists, only much more clearly, the death of Jesus is seen as the result of His devotion to the truth of His revelation—His vision of God and of His own relation to God, in opposition to the ignorance of His adversaries. This devotion is the fruit of His love to God and to men, and is purely voluntary. "I lay down My life, no man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father"; the commandment, that is to say, to be faithful to this loving duty of revelation. As in the rebuke to St. Peter at Cæsarea, we are allowed to see that this devotion involved an inner conflict. "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me: but the world shall know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment even so I do." There is here a fixed resolve in face of temptation on no account to abandon the task set before Him. Death as the utmost sacrifice was to crown the life, vanquishing the prince of this world and of selfishness, and once for all exalting love and devotion to duty as the only standard

of conduct. Without this utmost sacrifice the work is seen to be imperfect: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone." With it the world is to be won: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Viewed as the result of devotion and the sign of the most faithful obedience, the death became the revelation of a new standard: "That ye love one another as I have loved you"; "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Jesus' supreme consecration of His life was to lead to similar consecration in His disciples, and to win them through that to peace and freedom and victory over the world.

We saw that the words, "for the remission of sins," attributed to Jesus by St. Matthew on the occasion of the institution of the Eucharist, were probably of the nature of a comment upon the original words. The same may be said of the opening testimony of the Baptist in the Gospel of St. John, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." The comment in both cases is seen to have been not merely justified, but inevitable, when once men came to realise the height of Jesus' standard and achievement together with their own weakness and the true character and awfulness of sin. The mistake of subsequent writers has lain in placing the emphasis too exclusively upon the death of Jesus as the means of redemption. The faith that brings forgiveness, as St. John's Gospel makes quite clear, is faith in a living person and in His life of willing sacrifice seen as a proof of love to God and men. The true life lies in the assimilation of the human life to the life of God. The true life therefore is one sacrifice to love, of which death is the consummation and final proof. It was perhaps natural that later writers should take the death as the symbol of the whole: the loss thereby involved has none the less been serious, seeing that it is this that has all too often

obscured the full glory and brightness of Jesus' doctrine of God. We cannot be too often reminded that the central idea of Jesus' teaching is that of God as a loving Father, and that it is this that forms the sole basis of the hope of forgiveness, as it is the spring of all true conduct whether in Jesus or in His followers. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love." It is the perfect love of God that demands a return of perfect love manifested in obedience to His will in sacrifice for men. This Jesus gave, winning others thereby, and entered into His glory; this others are to seek to give in Him. The unity in love of St. John, "that they all may be one," follows out the thought of the Sermon on the Mount: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," or that of the Lord's Prayer, where the entry into the kingdom of forgiveness is an entry through love: "forgive us as we forgive."

We have spoken once more of "the kingdom." It is a phrase that only occurs twice in St. John's Gospel, and both times in the dialogue with Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"; "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Almost immediately in that same discourse the idea of "life" is substituted for that of "the kingdom" and retained throughout the Gospel. It is a change for which certain usages of the phrase, "the kingdom of God," in the synoptists have already prepared us. Once the kingdom of God can be described as "within you," it is only a step to substitute for it the conception of "life." And as in St. John the kingdom is from the first seen to centre in and be dependent upon the living personality of Jesus, so "life" becomes the appropriate summary of the ideas hitherto covered by the phrase "the kingdom of God"; "living" is now the equivalent for "seeing" or "entering

into" the kingdom. It makes no practical difference whether the term used is "life" or "life eternal." The conception of "eternal life" not as belonging only to another world, but to this no less, is everywhere prominent in the discourses of this Gospel; it is, as we have seen, not absent from the records of the other evangelists. All true life, whether here or hereafter, is seen to be dependent upon union with God. This involves the doctrine of its continuance, for a union with God that ended with earthly death would not be worth the name.

This same dialogue with Nicodemus brings the conception of life into close relation with the doctrine of the Spirit, of which we have purposely reserved our discussion to the close, not as being a subject confined to this gospel, but as being brought into greater prominence here than elsewhere. From the earliest commencement of His ministry, as recorded by the synoptists, Jesus represents His life and work as under the influence of the Spirit of God. In St. Luke the prophecy that He selects to describe His mission is one that refers everything to the influence of the Spirit: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." And in St. Matthew the overcoming of the opposition to the kingdom in the casting out of evil spirits is the work of the Spirit of God, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

In the Gospel of St. John this doctrine is more fully developed in expression, but the development is entirely upon the lines of Jesus' thought as we have already traced them elsewhere. In the opening discourse with Nicodemus, in analogy with Jesus' own experience as recorded by St. Luke, the entry of each individual soul into the life of the kingdom is represented as a new birth under the influence of the Spirit: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That new

birth is characterised in a simile that exactly described Jesus' own freedom of judgment and selection in dealing with the world and ideas as He found them—a freedom that must often have seemed so inexplicable to the men of His time: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." And then, as these Johannine discourses, belonging as we have seen for the most part probably to the closing period, describe for us the fully developed, or, if we reject any theory of development, fully revealed Messianic consciousness of Jesus based on the consciousness of union with God in perfect sonship, the doctrine of the Spirit takes a new significance. While present with the disciples Jesus Himself reveals the Spirit as He reveals God; and so perfect is the union that there is no need to consider them apart. Towards the close, in view of His approaching departure, He promises to send from the Father the Spirit of truth, which on the one hand will recall His teaching, and on the other will guide His disciples amid all new difficulties and emergencies. Only with the full revelation of the perfection of the divine sonship could come the full revelation of the doctrine of the Spirit: "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." "All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I that He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you." The death perfecting the sacrifice of the life would be the seal of His eternal union with the Father, and so the coming of the Spirit of God would be the coming of His Spirit. As His fellowship with the Father, so far from being broken, was but perfected through death, so was His fellowship with the disciples. The coming of the Spirit following on the death involved His own continued presence in and with the disciples and the

Church. It thus seems almost a matter of indifference whether He speaks of the coming of the Spirit or of His own coming: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." And no one who has ever felt the importance of the personal element in the teaching, or who has come to realise that to ignore it in the slightest degree is to be unhistorical and untrue to the best records that we possess, can fail to see that this insistence on His own continued presence is not an accident, but an essential feature in the teaching. The indwelling Spirit is the life of the Church, as the living Jesus was the life of His society while on earth. The doctrine of the Spirit has only been neglected where the doctrine of Jesus' Person has not been realised.

The value of this living personal element is the one point that has emerged in the course of this long argument. We began, as the men of that day must have begun, with the fragmentary utterance, the occasional act; through these we endeavoured to rise to the general and connecting ideas, and with them, whether in St. John or in the other evangelists, we passed at once to something that is wholly inexplicable and unique—Jesus' own religious consciousness and the doctrine of His person. Conscious of possessing a deeper knowledge of God and of God's will than any others had obtained, He was conscious also of giving expression to that will in His life in a truer sense than they: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Without that life of insight and sacrifice, perfected by obedient loyalty even unto death in response to the love of God, men would have had no revelation of the kingdom of God or of life or of salvation. Hence it is in the life of Jesus that the world is redeemed, and His life is given to win mankind. His presence is a continued presence in and through the Spirit of God. His personal power is still a living force, and without His personal

claim and call Christianity would not have been and could not be. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." That is the call and promise that must win and hold the world. The kingdom of God and life eternal were then and are now and will be for ever Jesus Christ: *cui sit gloria in sæcula.* Amen.

IV.

THE PERMANENT RELIGIOUS VALUE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By C. F. BURNEY

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IN entering upon the subject of this essay, it is, perhaps, desirable to guard against a possible misapprehension.

The choice of such a title as "the *permanent* religious value of the Old Testament" may possibly seem to imply, or to suggest, that at the hands of critical investigation the Old Testament scriptures *have suffered loss;* that where for former generations they possessed, or at least appeared to possess, a distinctive spiritual value, now for us this value has been diminished; that we of to-day can only hope to gather up the fragments of a shattered idol, and that we must scrutinise with care our right to hold these fragments, lest perchance even they should finally be wrested from our grasp.

This is not the sense in which the title is used.

It is intended rather to indicate that, with the advance of critical study of the Old Testament books, certain traditional views with regard to their authorship and contents have come to be modified or even abandoned, and that this progress in knowledge has tended to create the *apprehension* lest something such as has been described may have come about—lest, that is to say, the books may have become discredited, and their religious value minimised or annulled. If, however, upon examination

such an apprehension prove to be unfounded, it is clear that the religious value of the Old Testament writings must appear to rest upon a far more permanent and satisfactory basis than before. And still more must this religious value be enhanced, if the results obtained by historical criticism can be shown to issue, not merely in no sort of real loss, but in fact in a very decided gain.

Let us review in very brief outline some of the chief results obtained by the higher criticism[1] of the Old Testament, that it may be understood to what extent they conflict with, and supersede, the old traditional views.[2]

Firstly, it may be said generally that this criticism starts with the claim to deal with the Old Testament writings scientifically, *i.e.* in accordance with ordinary historical methods, and that, by application of these methods, it appears to have substantiated the claim at first put forward, and to have proved that the old view of verbal inspiration is no longer tenable.

There is in the composition of the Old Testament a large human element, and the literature which it embodies appears to have grown up in much the same way as any other ancient literature. In the background we have

[1] *Higher* criticism concerns itself with questions as to the composition, authorship, date, and historical value of an ancient document, as these may be judged from internal evidence. The term is used in contrast to *lower* (more frequently called *textual*) criticism, which is confined simply to the state of the text, and seeks to ascertain its original form, freed from the errors which are incidental to the transmission of ancient manuscripts. Thus the adjective *higher* defines nothing more than the relation of this class of criticism to the other; and the best descriptive antithesis to *textual* is *historical*.

When opponents of the critical method as applied to the Old Testament speak of "the *so-called* higher criticism," or frame the expression in inverted commas, the inference must be drawn that they are ignorant of the meaning of the term, and imagine that it implies an assumption of higher powers on the part of the critics.

[2] For an account of the principal results of the historical criticism of the Old Testament and the evidence upon which they are based, the reader is referred to DRIVER'S *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, and to ROBERTSON SMITH'S *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*.

traditions, more or less obscure, as to the origin and early development of the Hebrew race, traditions which frequently exist in duplicate with considerable divergence in detail, and which sometimes reflect the colour of the later age in which they were put into writing.

From the mass of these traditions that which is historical is seen gradually to evolve itself, at first scarcely to be distinguished from the traditional, then more definitely bearing the stamp of authenticity, and approving itself by the manner in which it tallies with the contemporary records of other nations, notably with the Assyrian inscriptions. But, even in these later and undoubtedly authentic narratives, it is clear that in many cases the compiler of ancient sources has allowed himself some latitude in the interpretation of history, and, especially in the case of *speeches* of some length, has expanded and adapted so as to reflect into an earlier age the religious standpoint of his own day.

And in all this, what is historical and what merely traditional can only be determined by just the same methods as are employed in dealing with the literature of Greece and Rome, or with the early records of our own country.

Moreover, critical investigation of the documents has demonstrated the necessity for a considerable shifting and rearrangement of the old traditional conception as to the growth of Israel's religion and civilisation. Whereas formerly it was usual to speak of the Law and the Prophets, and to regard the former as delivered in its entirety at an early period by Moses, and as considerably anterior to the latter, now it is clear that very much the reverse was really the case. Not only do the earlier prophets appear to have known nothing of any large codified body of laws regarded as a divine institution, but these laws exhibit among themselves considerable

diversity, and are clearly not all the work of one man or the product of one age. Rather, they consist of separate collections, promulgated at very different ages; the later, owing to changed circumstances, frequently in matter of details superseding and annulling the earlier.

Thus, the earliest elements in the Pentateuch legislation are undoubtedly the Decalogue (Exod. xx. 1–17), and the primitive collection of laws contained in Exodus xxxiv. 11–27.

Then there may be placed the so-called "Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xx. 23–xxiii. 33), a brief code dating from an early period and designed to regulate the life of a community living under simple conditions and devoting itself chiefly to agriculture.

At a much later date appeared the Book of Deuteronomy, this being without doubt the Book of the Law which was found in the Temple in the eighteenth year of King Josiah (B.C. 621), and which formed the prime factor in his great reformation (2 Kings xxii. 8–xxiii. 25).

And lastly we have "the Priestly Code," which, together with "the Law of Holiness" (Lev. xvii.–xxvi.), comprises the main body of laws in the latter part of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and appears to have grown up during the Exile, and to have attained its present form probably in the days of Ezra, about the middle of the fifth century B.C.

Accordingly, as has before been hinted, the prophets of the eighth century, Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, seem to know nothing of any great body of legislation bearing the august sanction of the name of Moses, but are acquainted merely with simple regulations like those of the Book of the Covenant. Jeremiah, who lived at the close of the seventh and beginning of the sixth century, shows acquaintance with Deuteronomy and is largely influenced by it; and the same is the case with the com-

piler of the Books of Kings, who must have lived in the reign of Jehoiakim, about 600 B.C. Neither of these writers, however, shows any knowledge of the Priestly Code, as does Ezekiel, who flourished during the Exile, about the middle of the sixth century. And even Ezekiel appears to have known this code, not in its final form, but, as it were, during its growth and before it had arrived at its completion.

Thus it may be gathered that it is no longer possible to regard the Law as a whole as prior to the Prophets; but that, on the contrary and speaking broadly, the prophetic stage was considerably anterior to the legalistic, this latter not attaining its full development until after the Exile.

Another result of the application of historical criticism to the Old Testament may be summarised as the pushing of a considerable portion of the literature down to a late date, into exilic and post-exilic times. Many books, at one time thought to form an integral whole, are now found to be composite, and portions of these are considerably later in origin than was traditionally supposed. Thus, to take the most outstanding example, the Book of Isaiah has been shown to embody, together with the authentic writings of the prophet, many elements which must be assigned to exilic and post-exilic times—notably the whole of the latter part of the book, chapters xl.–lxvi.; while the views as to the dates of other complete works —such as Job, Ecclesiastes, and Daniel—have had to undergo considerable modification. Whereas, again, it was formerly believed that the greater portion of the Psalter was due to David, now it appears that but few — some would maintain, none at all—of the Psalms can be ascribed to him, and that probably the larger number were composed during or after the Exile. Thus a period in Israel's history, in the past regarded as rather barren in literary products, is now shown to have been comparatively

prolific, while, in return, the earlier ages have been to some extent shorn of their supposed distinction.

But it is time to pass on from this necessarily brief and imperfect review of the results of the higher criticism, and to ask the question, How far have these results affected the religious value of the Old Testament?

First of all, it ought to be noticed that over a large area the religious value of the Old Testament stands quite untouched by such questions as can be raised by historical criticism. In that sphere which we may call the spiritual, the aspirations of the human soul so vividly pourtrayed in the Psalms and in passages of the Prophets, its stretching forth of its hands after God, its hanging upon Him, its moments of deep despair transformed as in an instant into the triumph of joyful hope, its outpourings of thanksgiving and praise—all these must from the very nature of the case remain quite unaffected by any question as to the date or authorship of the writings in which they are delineated. And if it be maintained that even in this sphere the effects of criticism have made themselves felt, showing in many cases that these ancient prophets and poets did not intend all that their words would seem to convey when viewed in the different atmosphere of a later age, surely it may be replied that this consideration, so far from minimising, rather increases our conviction of the spiritual value of their sentiments; that the response which these find in the human soul to-day, the response which they have found in the human soul in all ages, furnishes ample proof that they are instinct with the Divine Spirit, and that this Spirit is unfolding, and will yet unfold, the deeper truths of their meaning. It is fitting in this connection to quote the words of S. T. Coleridge in his *Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures:* "Need I say that I have met everywhere more or less copious sources

of truth, and power, and purifying impulses; that I have found words for my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterances for my hidden griefs, and pleadings for my shame and my feebleness? In short, whatever *finds* me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit, 'which remaining in itself, yet regenerateth all other powers, and in all ages entering into holy souls maketh them friends of God and prophets' (Wisd. vii. 27)."

And as in the spiritual, so in the moral sphere. The prophets' stern denunciations of the moral evils of their times, their asseveration that Jehovah desires mercy, or, as we might render, *kindliness*—the feeling of the moral obligation which binds man to man—rather than sacrifice; "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8) —the assertions of such great moral truths must still have their value to-day, in whatever age and under whatever circumstances they were first uttered, and whether their authors be known or unknown.

Or again, to take any of the great outstanding characters of the Old Testament; to take them even from the earliest times, and from narratives in which history seems to be inextricably blended with legend, it will scarcely be maintained that these lose their value, or that their attractiveness is in any way diminished, through the conclusions arrived at by historical criticism. The faith of Abraham—his implicit trust, that is, in God's leading—the integrity and steadfast continence of Joseph, must still remain for our example and instruction, whether all that is related of these characters be of the nature of veritable history, or be largely the ideal creation of a later age.

That which is really important is that the narrator has handed down a conception of man's relationship to God which commends itself to the human conscience in all time,

and lays the basis for moral and spiritual progress. He is a prophet, inasmuch as his mission is to convey to the world the mind and purpose of God with regard to man. Whether in developing his theme he confines himself to the facts of history or draws to some extent upon his imagination is a question of subordinate importance, interesting the historian rather than the religious thinker.

At this point we may touch upon the vexed question of the miraculous in the Old Testament narratives. Following out the same line of thought, it may be maintained that the evidence for the moral fact is different in character from, and quite unaffected by, the evidence for the physical miracle. The evidence for the former is the relationship which it bears to the history of Revelation as a whole, and the appeal which it makes to the conscience of to-day; the evidence for the latter has of necessity been weakened by the extension of our knowledge as to the sphere of uniformity in nature. Yet no aspersion is cast upon the writer, because that which was credible to him upon slight evidence may appear incredible to us. He was inspired to act as a teacher of religious truth, not of natural science. And thus, while we differ from him in so far as we believe that purely natural causes may have brought about the overthrow of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, yet we can see that God used these forces to effect His purpose, and we assent to the conclusion that He fought for Israel.

It cannot, however, be overlooked, upon any theory of inspiration, that the morality of the Old Testament is relative and often defective in character. Our Lord Himself sets His seal to this fact, when He claims to supersede the enactments of the Old Covenant: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you. . . ." The moral standard of Jehovah's religion, infinitely higher as it was than the

religious standards of surrounding nations, was yet only such as could be grasped by a more or less primitive civilisation, delivered and received "by divers portions and in divers manners." The morality of the legal enactment which, in the name of Moses, set the divine sanction to a man's giving his wife a bill of divorcement and putting her away, differs *toto cælo* from the morality of Hosea, refusing, in spite of all, to cast off the wretched, sin-stained Gomer, and tenderly yet firmly enunciating the true character of the marriage-bond, binding alike on him and her: "Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife: so will I also be toward thee" (Hos. iii. 3). It is this latter conception, and not the former, which furnishes a type of Jehovah's relationship to His people, wherein Love joins hands with Righteousness.

Or, again, it need not be perplexing if Jehu's blood-thirsty extermination of the house of Ahab, keenly commended by the writer of Kings as though well-pleasing to Jehovah (2 Kings x. 30), should be utterly reprobated by Hosea: "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease" (Hos. i. 4).[1] The two apostles were not arguing upon a false analogy when they cited the example of Elijah as a precedent for the calling down of fire upon the Samaritan village; but they failed to grasp the fact that in this instance the morality

[1] It may be noticed that in both these illustrations the higher example of morality happens to be earlier in date than the lower. Hosea (*circ.* B.C. 750) is earlier than the law of divorce as formulated in Deuteronomy xxiv. 1 ff. (B.C. 621; though the law itself is probably much older); and the same prophet is also prior to the first editor of Kings (*circ.* B.C. 600). Instances of *progressive* morality might be selected. Cf. the development of the theory of individual responsibility as seen in the dicta of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as contrasted with the older proverbial saying, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. xxxi. 29, 30; Ezek. xviii.; cf. Deut. xxiv. 16; 2 Kings xiv. 5, 6).

of Elijah was the morality of a bygone age, and so they called forth a rebuke (St. Luke ix. 51 ff.).

It is from this point of view that we must regard the morality of actions which are favourably presented by the Old Testament writers, as though in accordance with the Divine will, but which are apt to trouble the conscience of the reader who imagines that they have to be justified in accordance with the Christian standard. Abraham's signal act of obedience and of trust in God's promise (Heb. xi. 17 ff.) is bound up with the terrible conception that human sacrifice is acceptable as a costly gift to God. Israel's wars of extermination are regarded as Jehovah's retribution on the wicked, and test obedience to His commands, but only as these commands could be conceived by a semi-barbarous race. The terrible curses of the "imprecatory psalms" may serve to exhibit the eternal antipathy between righteousness and iniquity; but as the expression of a spirit of vengeance on the part of individuals they are flaws upon the morality of their authors, and have nothing to do with "the mind of Christ."

So far, then, we may maintain that the spiritual and moral value of the Old Testament stands quite unaffected by our advance in knowledge as to the composition and authorship of the various books.

But it may justly be remarked that the critical study of the Old Testament has brought with it but small gain to religion, if all that can be said is that to a great extent criticism has left the religious value of the Old Testament untouched, and as it was in former times. What would seem to be the ideal, above and beyond this, is that the attainments of scientific criticism should be found to substantiate the truth of our faith, albeit not perhaps in a manner strictly in accordance with preconceived traditional

ideas, becoming a powerful argument, of real value in approving the Divine origin of the Christian creed.

It is not, the writer believes, too bold an assertion to say that this is being accomplished. The main purpose of this essay is to attempt to trace out some of the lines along which criticism seems already to have brought forth fruit, and to have prepared the ground for a yet more abundant harvest.

First of all, we have to notice the constructiveness of Old Testament criticism.

An objection often brought against the higher criticism of the Old Testament, by those who have an imperfect appreciation of its methods and results, is that it is purely *negative* in character. This is by no means the case. Necessarily, at its commencement, and in making its attack upon the outworn theories of tradition, the negative side of any scientific criticism must first come into prominence. But as it advances, if it is true to its principles as a means for the seeking of the truth, this negative stage is passed, and science exhibits its *constructive* side.

Such, it may fairly be claimed, has come to be the case with Old Testament criticism. It presents us with a theory of the growth of the Old Testament literature and the development of the Old Testament religion, based upon a minute examination of the sources and a scientific employment of the means of inquiry which lie at the disposal of students at the present day. It represents the outcome of an attempt to bring the Old Testament history of the religion of Israel into line with other fields of learning in which knowledge has advanced through application of *the comparative method.* It is a matter of common knowledge what a wonderful impetus the study of origins, in all its many branches, has received during the last fifty years through the labours of Mr. Darwin in the field of biology. Methods which he

employed so successfully in his investigation of the origin of species have since been utilised in many other fields, and the result has been that knowledge in these various departments has advanced by leaps and bounds.

Could and ought the study of the Old Testament to have remained stationary and untouched? No one would dispute that a great gain to our knowledge of the Old Testament language has resulted through scientific comparison of the other languages of the Semitic group. And if such a use of the comparative method commends itself in the case of the Hebrew language, may not the same method be legitimately employed in the case of the Hebrew literature and of the Hebrew religion? Rather, is not the fearless and reverent employment of such a method a proof to the world that Christian scholars are sure that the Old Testament has nothing to fear through the application of the searching rays of scientific truth, but can only gain through being brought into line with the general advance in knowledge which the last half-century has witnessed?

Having thus spoken of the method, let us notice the results.

Broadly, it may be said that a recognition of the human element in the Old Testament has served to emphasise and bring home to us the reality of the Divine element with a force which otherwise we might have failed to appreciate. The placing of documents in their true chronological position, and the study of the religious ideas which they contain in connection with the history of the times, the endeavour accurately to ascertain the *first* meaning which the words of prophet and teacher must have conveyed to their contemporaries, all this has led us, and will in the future further lead us, to see that there is in the religion of the Old Testament an orderly process of development, leading up to the full manifestation of our Lord.

These documents, studied after the manner and by the methods applied to any other literature, have proved that they possess in themselves something far beyond what any other literature possesses; and, in spite of their fragmentariness, are seen to exhibit a unity in diversity which cannot be ascribed to any merely human agency.

We turn to an examination of the primitive ideas and customs which belonged to the early religion of the Hebrews, and we find that they exhibit very much that is common to other Semitic religions. We see the tribes of Israel settled in Canaan in the midst of races speaking practically the same language as theirs, with at most mere dialectical peculiarities, using the same titles to describe their deities as Israel used in speaking of Jehovah, holding the same ideas with regard to sacred places as the scenes of Theophanies, and placing their sanctuaries in the same way at these sacred places, upon hill-tops and beside springs of water and spreading trees.[1] We take note of such facts as these, because they point to a marked similarity in externals between the religion of Israel and the religion of the Canaanites; but then we are confronted by the question, How was it that the religion of Israel, in face of such outward similarities, escaped assimilation to the impure and seductive nature-worship of Canaan? One answer only is adequate as an explanation. It was because of the unique inner nature of the Mosaic religion, expressed in the exclusive claim to allegiance which Jehovah made upon His worshippers. And the ground upon which this claim was based was the *character* of Jehovah as revealed by Moses to the tribes of Israel; *Jehovah was a moral deity, and demanded the same moral characteristics in His worshippers.*[2]

[1] Cf. the present writer's *Outlines of Old Testament Theology*, chaps. i., ii. The subject should be studied in detail in ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*.

[2] Cf. ROBERTSON SMITH, *The Prophets of Israel*, Lect. ii.; MONTEFIORE, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 46 f.

Can we fail to trace in this the working of the divine purpose of God—that which St. Paul names "the purpose of God according to selection"[1]—separating for Himself one particular nation to be the instrument for the reception and development of those truths of Revelation which were to issue finally in the full manifestation of God to mankind?

And then, in reviewing this moral character of Israel's God, we notice that it contains within itself the possibility and the promise of a *progressive* Revelation, a Revelation by which man can be lifted up, so as to correspond in some degree to the moral nature of his God, and to go on advancing towards a goal. That is to say, in contrast to the religions of the surrounding nations, the foundation is laid for continuous progress; there is to be no stunting, no degeneracy.

This fact, which we know to have been fulfilled in history, is already inherent in the name of Israel's God, as revealed to Moses at Horeb. The name *Jehovah* seems to mean *He who will become*, and that passage (Exod. iii. 13–15) in which the name is elucidated by the statement, "I am what I am," or rather, "I will become what I will become," implies that no words can adequately sum up all that the God of Israel *will become* to His chosen people;[2] that He will go on making revelation of Himself "in many parts and in many manners," up till the fulness of time when He is revealed in His Son, the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance.

The idea that Israel can correspond to the character of Jehovah carries with it the conception that there can be formed a *covenant* between the God of Israel and His people, a conception which is constantly emphasised throughout the books of the Old Testament. It is upon

[1] ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ Θεοῦ, Romans ix. 11.
[2] Cf. DRIVER in *Studia Biblica*, i. pp. 12 ff.

the basis of this conception that the prophets found their doctrine of the Messianic expectation, with all that is bound up with it. Let us consider how far criticism has affected the validity of this cardinal doctrine of Old Testament prophecy.

If it be asserted that it is the merit of critical investigation to have substantiated the fact that the prophets point forward and bear witness to Christ, the assertion is likely to be met with the rejoinder that, according to the old traditional method of study, such a witness was regarded as nearly the sole end and purpose of their prophecies. Still, the fact can scarcely be disputed that upon the old view of things the character of this reference was much less real. It was uninvestigated, unproven, and for this very reason there was always room for the suspicion that it might be explained away.

Now, when investigation has been made, when we understand generally the circumstances under which the prophecies were uttered, and their primary reference, then it seems that the further meaning which, as in the face of facts we are bound to recognise, these prophets were inspired to convey must come home to us as an absolutely unique and marvellous phenomenon.

Let it be understood that when the writer speaks of *Messianic prophecy* the term is not meant merely to cover the fact that the prophets, by the general drift and tenour of their teaching, were instrumental in shaping that development which found its head in the teaching of Jesus Christ, but it is meant that there are passages in the prophets—not isolated, but frequent and of an essential part with all their teaching—in which they put forward the well-defined *ideal of a Person* whose advent their future is to witness; and that this phenomenon is explained when recognised as the heralding of One who is the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, and the

Inaugurator of a new era, but otherwise would be wholly inexplicable.

We will now endeavour to mark out some of the aspects from which a study of Messianic prophecy in strict accordance with critical methods seems to offer very valuable results.

In the first place, the employment of the historical method demands that particular prophecies should be studied primarily in relationship to the circumstances of the times at which they were produced. That is to say, it is before everything necessary that the historical background of a prophecy should, as far as is possible, be thoroughly grasped, in order that the meaning which the prophet must have intended by his words to convey to his contemporaries may be rightly understood. It seems a truism to say that every prophet spoke in the first place to meet the needs of his own time, and intended that his words should have their own particular immediate reference. Yet, as a matter of fact, it is only through the application of the historical and scientific method to the works of the prophets, regarded as any other literature might be regarded, that this first principle of interpretation has come in any degree to be utilised.

And, secondly, for the right understanding of prophecy —the right estimation of its evidential value as part of the argument for the truth of the Christian Faith—it is necessary that greater stress should be laid upon its bearing *as a whole*, and less upon the evidence of particular short passages regarded in isolation. And it may fairly be claimed that such a comprehensive view of the bearing of prophecy has only become possible through the labours of historical criticism, because this alone may be said to have in some measure produced order out of chaos, and to have enabled us—if still but imperfectly—to trace the gradual development of religious ideas in ancient Israel, and the

tendencies which down the ages were at work in giving them shape.

Let us now contrast the evidential value of Messianic prophecy as studied according to the traditional method with its value as studied in accordance with the critical method. Why is it that upon traditional lines the evidence of Messianic prophecy does not occupy a more important position among the "proofs" of Christianity? Why is it that, of those who adopt or acquiesce in the traditional method of interpretation, for one who really feels that he possesses in the Old Testament a powerful buttress to his faith, there are a hundred who regard it mainly as a weak point which has continually to be irksomely guarded, lest the citadel should be taken by storm? The reason seems to be that, upon the old lines, the mind of a serious student of prophecy must necessarily be influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by a want of cohesion in the body of evidence, and by a certain artificiality in the method of interpretation. Particular prophecies are taken in isolation, without reference to the occasions which first called them forth; and an application of them directly, as it were, to the circumstances of our Lord's life involves a straining of subordinate and unessential details which weakens the total effect upon the mind.

Turning now to the effect produced upon the mind by study of the same Scriptures upon critical lines, the writer can speak for himself and affirm that the evidence of Messianic prophecy acts upon his mind with a peculiar cogency, as one of the most powerful of intellectual proofs of the truth of Christianity.

Wherein does the difference lie? Probably it lies mainly in the fact that the critical student discerns with some clearness the development of certain tendencies out of small beginnings. Watching their growth, he

notices how again and again the events of history were fitted to give them shape in what (in view of the larger future) he feels to have been the best way; and, as they are seen to flower and bear their fruit, the conviction seizes him that a miracle is being enacted before his eyes, if by a miracle is understood something quite unique and out of the ordinary course of nature, a cogent proof of the working of the Divine hand in shaping the affairs of this world.

Such a statement as to the wide outlook offered to the Old Testament student through the medium of historical criticism requires illustration. We must therefore endeavour to indicate in a few words the main lines upon which Messianic prophecy is developed, the tendencies which gave it shape, and the manner in which Divine guidance so ordered it that, while arising out of temporary circumstances, it might have a far wider and deeper significance, only to be satisfied in the Person and work of our Lord.

The main idea which lies behind all Old Testament teaching as to the relationship between Israel and Israel's God is the idea of the *Covenant.* Just as in old times, among the Semitic races of which Israel formed one, it was customary that the covenant-contract should form the basis of all friendly dealings between man and man, so it was firmly believed that between Jehovah and the nation of Israel such a contract had been concluded.[1]

That Jehovah should choose Israel as the recipient of this bond was a mark of supreme privilege. Israel was the chosen nation, above all the nations of the earth. Let us now briefly notice the manner in which the idea of this covenant-relationship gives shape to later thought.

Two points require emphasis. In the first place the

[1] Cf. the writer's *Outlines of Old Testament Theology*, chap. iii.

covenant is regarded as concluded by Jehovah with Israel *in the person of Israel's righteous ancestors.* In the book of Genesis it will be found related that God definitely entered into covenant with Abraham, and that this covenant was again ratified with Abraham's son Isaac, and yet again with his son's son, Jacob. Here is the root of the matter. Israel's ancestors, as such, are representative of the nation as a whole, and the covenant thus concluded can never be annulled. In later days sin may enter in and mar the relationship in the case of individuals, and apostasy may even attain such huge dimensions as to appear all but universal. But it never can be *really* universal. In the darkest times Elijah may exclaim, "The children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left"; yet Jehovah knows of "seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." And whenever and wherever there is such a faithful remnant, *that* is the true nation, in which God's covenant with Abraham remains ratified. Jehovah acts for the honour of His Name — for His oath's sake, in guarding the continuity of this faithful Israel. In Samuel's noble words, "The Lord will not forsake His people for His great Name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you a people unto Himself" (1 Sam. xii. 22).

And, secondly, we have to take special note of Jehovah's covenant with *David.*

David is characterised as the man after Jehovah's own heart (1 Sam. xiii. 14), not because his character is by any means represented as flawless, but because, in spite of all his shortcomings, he constantly recognises the sacred trust which has been committed to him as king over Jehovah's heritage, and realises, in the main, that condition of

dependence and reliance upon the Divine Ruler which should be characteristic of the human ruler in the ideally constituted theocratic state. Thus it is promised that David is always to have a "lamp" before Jehovah in Jerusalem, the quenchless flame being emblematic of a never-failing posterity to sit upon his throne.

It is this twofold idea—the doctrine of the indestructibility of Israel as a nation and of the Davidic dynasty—which leavens the whole of prophetic thought, and gives tone and colour to the conception of a future Messianic Age which is put forward with so much prominence in the writings of the prophets.

Now let us notice a few of the salient points in the picture of the Messianic Age—such points as, when studied, appear irresistibly to convey the impression that they have a far wider scope than can be satisfied by the immediate circumstances of the times which gave them birth.

For the sake of simplicity we may treat the subject under two heads—(1) *The character of the King-Messiah*, and (2) *the nature of His kingdom and age.*

(1) The figure of the King-Messiah is earliest pourtrayed by the writing prophets of the eighth century B.C. The portrait, dimly suggested by Hosea, receives a more finished study—bolder outline and deeper colours—at the hands of Isaiah. Micah, a younger contemporary of Isaiah, seems to follow in his footsteps in the picture which he sketches. Later prophets, and especially Jeremiah, set their impress to the work.

As to the King's characteristics; He is, in the first place, always represented as of the house of David. Sometimes, indeed, allusion is made to Him under the name of David. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king" (Hos. iii. 5;

cf. Jer. xxx. 8, 9). His birthplace is Bethlehem, the town of David (Micah v. 2).

And, secondly—a point of the highest importance—He is pictured as the true embodiment of the theocratic ideal. Receiving His commission and the power to execute it directly from God as God's vicegerent, He in a very real sense represents God to man. This may be seen in His symbolic names. Isaiah calls Him *Immanuel, i.e.* "God is with us" (Isa. vii. 1–ix. 7); for Jeremiah He is *Jehovah çidqēnu*, "Jehovah is our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 5–8; xxxiii. 14–26). And these names indicate, not merely that the King is to be the *pledge* of God's Presence among men, but also, in a true sense, the *embodiment* of that Presence. He is invested with attributes which are, in fact, divine. Immanuel is named "God—mighty one" (Isa. ix. 6)—a title which is elsewhere applied by Isaiah to Jehovah Himself (x. 21). For Jeremiah, too, the Messiah is the embodiment of Jehovah's covenant—a *new* covenant written not upon tables of stone, but placed within the inward parts, engraved upon the heart (Jer. xxxi. 31 ff.).

Here is a conception which, it must be admitted, was not and could not be fulfilled by any mere earthly monarch, but which was in the fullest sense realised in the Person of our Lord, even as He claimed.

(2) Next, as to *His kingdom and age.*

Here, as is natural in pictures drawn primarily for the times which gave them birth, the prophets' horizon is, to some extent, limited by their particular temporal circumstances.

The nation is regarded as purified through judgment, and in general the Messianic outlook is foreshortened; the future age is pictured as immediately succeeding upon the judgment involved through the prophet's special circumstances, the immediate sins of the Israel of his age.

The prophets also in general paint a picture of the future age in which temporal physical prosperity has its share. The foes of Israel, as representing the world-power in opposition to Jehovah's people, are vanquished and broken; the ideal limits of the kingdom, as it was in the days of Solomon, are once more restored, and the land yields its increase with exceptional fertility.

But the fact cannot fail to be noticed that this picture of material prosperity always tends, like a dissolving view, to pass over into another picture in which the moral and spiritual basis of the kingdom forms the central subject which rivets the gaze. "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34). Here we have in very deed the picture of a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom "not of this world."

Or, if we turn to consider the manner in which the King-Messiah administers the affairs of His realm, we read that "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes nor reprove after the hearing of His ears, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." And then, after a

beautiful sketch of the universal peace which shall prevail, even extending its influence to the lower animals, the writer continues, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 2–9). Here, if we mistake not, there is no picture of a limited Israelitish kingdom, a mere political unit among many other such; it is a kingdom of which the basis is the Religion of the one true God, and of which the limits are coextensive with the world.

And if this be so, what of the foreign nations in their relationship to Israel? We need only to turn to that prophecy of Isaiah from which quotation has just been made: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the root of Jesse (*i.e.* the King-Messiah) which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto Him shall the nations seek; and His resting-place shall be glorious" (*v.* 10). The nations are to be united to Israel, not by compulsion, but through community in the highest of interests. This is a conception which is worked out elsewhere in a variety of ways, and which, in fact, goes back as far as the record of Jehovah's promise to Abraham, reiterated to Isaac and to Jacob, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."[1]

These few illustrations have been chosen out of very many which might have been collected to prove that the writings of the prophets, taken as a whole, and with a due regard to their immediate temporal reference, point forward in a truly wonderful way to a supernatural King-Messiah ruling over a spiritually constituted kingdom—

[1] Genesis xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxviii. 14. In the two passages, Genesis xxii. 18, xxvi. 4, we must render, "In thee shall all the families of the earth *bless themselves*," *i.e.* when they wish to invoke a special benediction they will formulate it as a desire to partake of the privileges of the seed of Abraham. This reflexive sense is possible, though not necessary, in the three passages given above, in which the passive meaning is adopted. Upon either rendering the general bearing of the passages is the same.

a conception which is only satisfied by our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, and the divine society which He came to found.

But as yet we have not touched upon the conception of the suffering Servant of Jehovah and his mission, which occurs so frequently in the exilic section of the book of Isaiah, chaps. xl.–lv., chap. lxi. 1, ff. This conception occupies a position of so striking an importance as to demand some detailed consideration in a sketch of the evidence of Messianic prophecy as weighed from the critical standpoint.

The title "Servant" of Jehovah, as used in Isaiah xl.–lv., is not altogether a new one. It is applied to many of the great figures of Israel's history who are pictured as living in an intimate relationship to Jehovah—Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, and others. Especially is application of the title made to the prophets as a body, as entrusted by Jehovah with a special mission. And not only in the bare use of the title may anticipations be traced in Israel's earlier history, but also in the conception therein involved —in the idea that a man may commit himself to God in trustful service, may lean implicitly upon God's guidance, may feel that he is an instrument in God's hands for the working out of His good pleasure in the world. This appears very prominently throughout the narrative of the life of Abraham, who is the typical Israelite, the Ideal of the nation. Or, again, Jeremiah may be selected as a typical illustration of the conception in the case of the individual, realising as he does in a high degree the condition of uttermost surrender to, and dependence upon, Jehovah:—"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy Name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jer. xv. 16).

Turning now to Isaiah xl.–lv., the work, be it remem-

bered, of some writer during the Babylonian exile, let us inquire what may have been the immediate reference of the conception of the Servant of Jehovah.

We have already noticed that the title is frequently employed elsewhere of the prophets of Jehovah generally; but as the prophets have been singled out from the mass of Israel as the medium of God's special revelation, so has Israel as a whole been singled out from the other nations of the world. Thus in "the Song of Moses" in Deuteronomy we find the title "His servants" applied generally, from this point of view, to the members of the chosen nation (Deut. xxxii. 36, 43), while the singular "My servant" is used of the nation as a whole both by Jeremiah and by Ezekiel (Jer. xxx. 10; xlvi. 27; Ezek. xxviii. 25; xxxvii. 25).

In the same way, in the chapter of Isaiah with which we are dealing, the title "My servant" is several times applied to the nation of Israel at large, as chosen by Jehovah. The fact, however, cannot wholly be overlooked by the writer that the bulk of the nation is untrue to its vocation, blind and deaf to God's call: "Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger that I send? Who is blind as the devoted one, and blind as the servant of Jehovah?" (xlii. 18, 19). We seem to find, therefore, a narrowed use of the term to denote the Israel within Israel, the faithful worshippers of God upon whom the hope of the nation must be centred. This true Israel is idealised by the prophet as an individual—the Servant of Jehovah.

This is not the place in which to enter into a lengthy discussion of the prophet's conception. Let us summarise. The ideal Servant is the anointed prophet of Jehovah (lxi. 1). He is the representative of the new covenant between Jehovah and His people, of which Jeremiah had already spoken (xlii. 6). It is his mission "to preach

good tidings to the meek, . . . to bind up the broken-hearted," encouraging the depressed exiles by the promise of forgiveness and near approaching release, "the acceptable year of Jehovah" (lxi. 1–3; cf. xl. 1, 2). Thus he is "to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel" (xlix. 5, 6). The gentle tenderness with which he fulfils his charge is especially noticeable. As the trained disciple of Jehovah, he understands how "to sustain the weary with a word" (l. 4); "a bruised reed shall he not break, and a dimly burning wick shall he not quench" (xlii. 3).

But his mission is not confined to his own nation. As it opens out before him, he realises that it is world-wide in scope. Jehovah's promise is, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that My salvation may be unto the ends of the earth" (xlix. 6; cf. xlii. 6 b). The Servant is "to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," and "the isles shall wait for his instruction" (xlii. 1, 4).

Such a work, however, as is committed to him can only be accomplished through much suffering. His contemporaries fail to understand his steadfast purpose; he is greeted, not with enthusiasm, but with scorn and loathing. None like him has ever understood what sorrow means. He experiences to the full the sharp pain of isolation, the agony caused by misinterpretation of the active sympathy which he has to proffer (liii. 3 ff). Yet, in spite of all, he still persists. In the teeth of active persecution he sets his face like a flint, for the Lord Jehovah is his helper, and he *knows* that he shall not be put to shame (l. 5–9). Finally, in the pursuit of his aims, he voluntarily suffers a cruel death, allowing himself to be numbered with transgressors, and undergoing the death and burial of the worst of felons (liii. 7–9).[1]

[1] The text of Isa. liii. 9*a* ought probably to run: "And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the violent (*or*, with evil-doers) his sepulchral mound."

But it is through death that the purpose of his life is worked out. His death is a guilt-offering (liii. 10). His sufferings are vicarious; Jehovah has been pleased to smite him in order that his blood may become the seed of a renewed community. Thus he is pictured as rising again from the dead. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand." He gazes with satisfaction upon his labours, knowing that, through his uttermost self-surrender, God's purpose has been accomplished to the full.

Now, as regards chapter liii., we have to inquire who the speakers are who are represented as narrating the facts of the sufferings and death of the Servant, expressing the while their amazement as the meaning of it all dawns upon their senses. Briefly, they seem to be—not other Israelites who are speaking about a select few within their own nation, but—the heathen nations of the world who are speaking about the nation of Israel, regarded for the time being as a righteous unit. That is to say, it is not a question of the redemption of the nation of Israel by its righteous members, but of the redemption of the world at large by the nation of Israel. This seems to be clear, if we pay regard to the introductory words of the section, "So shall he (the Servant) startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand" (lii. 15). And then immediately follows the description, which gives voice to the astonishment of these heathen nations and their kings.

Nor need we be surprised if the Servant, who elsewhere seems to represent a righteous nucleus within the nation of Israel, should here come to answer to Israel as a whole. The measure of the nation's religion is found in its faithful members, be they many or few; they represent the

nation charged with a mission to the world at large; and regarded thus, in relation to the other nations of the world, as the conservator of the true Religion, Israel as a whole is the righteous nation, and may be ideally invested with the attributes of Jehovah's Servant.

But what of the resurrection of the Servant?

We have this conception, applied to the revivification of the nation by Hosea, writing long years before the Exile: "After two days will He revive us: on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him" (Hosea vi. 2). And again, and as in Isaiah liii. *during* the Exile, the same conception is worked out at length by Ezekiel in his vision of the valley of dry bones: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost: we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves, and will cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my spirit within you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I the Lord hath spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11–14).

The Servant of Jehovah, therefore, as he figures in Isaiah liii. represents in the first place Israel as a nation, passing through the sufferings and vicissitudes of the Exile, and, as it were, emerging from the tomb at the restoration from captivity in order to be the instrument for the redemption of the world.

And when did the prophet imagine that his prediction was to be realised? Did he take a foreshortened view of the future, and imagine a new era about to dawn upon the world immediately upon the nation's return from Exile?

And if so, and having regard to the day of small things which succeeded, aye, and lasted for five centuries after the return, must we say that his prediction was a failure? Surely not. It was as the seed which is cast into the ground and seems to rot and perish, but which in its season springs again and bears its flower and fruit—a fulfilment infinitely more glorious than the promise might have seemed to warrant: so was it in the Incarnation of our Lord.

Thus we are brought to the conclusion that the Personality of Christ absorbs these scattered rays which gleam across the pages of Israel's history. The King-Messiah and His kingdom, the righteous Servant and his mission, are brought together and realised in the Person of our Lord. We find in the Incarnation the answer to these spiritual strivings of the nation which among all other nations reached the highest level of moral and theological thought; and in the fact that this is so we possess one of the strongest of arguments for the truth of the claims of Jesus Christ. If the writer has in any degree made good his contention that it is owing to the labours of historical criticism that we are able to adjust our view as to the bearing of Hebrew prophecy as a whole, and to understand the tendencies which were at work in giving it shape, then it must be thankfully acknowledged that the critical study of the Old Testament has resulted in a gain to the Faith, and we are able to look forward with confidence to that which the future may produce in the same field.

At this point the writer would gladly draw to a close and lay aside his pen. But there remains a question too intimately connected with his subject to be passed by unnoticed. The fact cannot be ignored that acceptance and even consideration of the critical position, as it affects

the date and authorship of various portions of the Old Testament literature, has been opposed at the outset by appeal to the authority of our Lord. It has been urged that, by acceptance of the traditional views which were current in His time, our Lord has foreclosed certain questions of historical criticism: that, for example, the fact that He "quotes Deuteronomy as a work of the highest authority on the subject of man's relations and duties to God"[1] forbids the theory that the book should be assigned to any age or authorship but those of Moses; that His reference to the author of Psalm cx. as "David"[2] establishes the fact that David wrote the Psalm; that His reference to Jonah as a type of Himself[3] precludes the view that the book of Jonah is, in the main, allegorical rather than historical.

To this objection it may be replied, in the first place, that our Lord, in making citation from the Old Testament, could scarcely have done otherwise than acquiesce in the current views of his time upon questions which fall within the domain of criticism. He regards the Old Testament as inspired to make appeal to the hearts and consciences of men, as inspired also to point forward to Himself. Such a view of Old Testament inspiration stands quite unaffected by questions which can be raised by historical criticism. The summary of the Law and the Prophets is to love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and one's neighbour as one's self, whatever view be taken of the letter of any particular ordinance; the tenour of prophecy is to point forward to Christ and His kingdom, whatever opinion may be entertained as to the precise date or authorship of any particular prophecy.

[1] St. Matthew iv. 4; Deuteronomy viii. 3; St. Matthew iv. 7; Deuteronomy vi. 16; St. Matthew iv. 10; Deuteronomy vi. 13 and x. 20. Cf. LIDDON, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 477.

[2] St. Mark xii. 35–37.

[3] St. Matthew xii. 39–41; St. Luke xi. 29, 30, 32.

Accordingly it will be found upon consideration that our Lord never raises questions with regard to the Old Testament which in any way bring under discussion the critical views of His audience. To have done so would have had the effect of concentrating attention upon the letter rather than upon the spirit. Thus, if before citation from Deuteronomy He had thought it necessary to indicate that the book in its present form was not the work of Moses, but of a much later age, it may be imagined that such a storm of criticism and discussion would have been raised that the *purpose* of the citation, the moral or spiritual truth contained in it, could never have been reached. Rather, He is content to take the letter of the Old Testament as interpreted by His hearers: "What is written in the Law? How readest thou?"[1] And His rebuke is never directed against a lack of critical acumen, but against failure to perceive spiritual facts which lie patent upon the pages of the Old Testament, and against absence of the *will* to make application of the teaching which it conveys.

This argument as to our Lord's use of the Old Testament would hold good even upon the assumption that our Lord *as man* was the possessor of all knowledge, that His Divinity so illuminated the Humanity as to cause His human mind to possess an infused knowledge which was practically omniscient. But such an assumption is emphatically contradicted by the writers of the New Testament. The reality of our Lord's humanity means that His human mind was subject to the limitations of human knowledge. Thus we read that there was a development of mind, as of body, as He advanced from childhood to manhood: "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men."[2] The

[1] St. Luke x. 26.

[2] St. Luke ii. 52, modelled upon the statement with regard to Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 26), but with the addition "in wisdom and stature."

limitation of human knowledge is expressed in His own statement with reference to the great day of judgment: "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only";[1] and by the fact that He asks questions, obviously with the purpose of eliciting information,[2] and expresses surprise at facts which come under His observation, as new experiences to His mind.[3]

The truth of His divinity, implying the possession of absolute unlimited knowledge, must not blind our eyes to this proper limitation of His human knowledge, though our mind is incapable of correlating the two facts. It must be remembered that there is the same difficulty in correlating His omnipotence as God with the human limitation in *power* which is attested by His use of prayer, which implies a real seeking after that grace and power of which as man He stood in need, and in respect of which He must therefore have consented to undergo the limitations proper to humanity.

Granting, then, the reality of His human mind, it surely follows that His knowledge of the Old Testament must have been acquired by study, after the manner which is proper to men. Doubtless His acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures formed part of that growth in wisdom which is attested by St. Luke; and it is reasonable to suppose that He would adopt in the course of His studies those views with regard to the date and authorship of the Scriptures which formed the currency of the scholarship of His times. It belonged indeed to His unique spiritual insight that He was able to grasp and to draw out the

[1] St. Mark xiii. 32; St. Matthew xxiv. 36. The words "neither the Son" are absent from some MSS. in St. Matthew, but "the documentary evidence in their favour is overwhelming" (Westcott and Hort).

[2] St. Mark vi. 38, viii. 5, xi. 21; St. Luke viii. 30; St. John xi. 34.

[3] St. Mark vi. 6, xi. 13, iv. 40, vii. 18, viii. 21, xiv. 37; St. Luke ii. 49. Cf. GORE, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 147 ff.

deeper meaning of the Scriptures; but this spiritual insight was due to the enlightenment of the unction of the Spirit acting upon His perfect human mind, and cannot be thought to have belonged to the omniscience of the Godhead *taking the place of* His proper human knowledge.

The question has been raised whether such a limitation in the knowledge of our Lord's human mind as is here supposed can be thought to affect His infallibility as a teacher within the sphere of faith and morals. A moment's reflection will suffice to show that this is not the case. Our Lord's relationship as man to the Father expressed the perfection of that which is properly denoted by the term *religion—i.e.* it was the perfection of the bond of union between a human soul and God, realised through perfect submission of the human will to the divine will. Through such a relationship the human soul, unclouded by sin, was fully illuminated as to the will or mind of God, thus possessing absolute inerrancy upon all that concerns the relationship of the human soul to God, *i.e.* upon all questions of faith and morals. That it is in this perfect relationship of the human soul to God that our Lord's infallibility with regard to faith and morals is inherent is attested by the promise that the realisation of such a relationship (effected through union with Himself) shall carry with it for His followers participation in inerrancy within the same sphere: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."[1] But such an infallibility as belongs to the perfection of the *religious* bond stands quite unconnected with omniscience in regard to scientific questions, such as questions of the historical criticism of the Old Testament. Our Lord never promises His followers omniscience in such scientific matters through

[1] St. John vii. 17.

realisation of union with God through Him; nor does it enter into the scheme of His revelation to claim such omniscience for Himself as man.

We find, then, that our Lord, in His references to the Old Testament, assumes the traditional views with regard to date and authorship. This is the case in His quotation from Psalm cx., recorded in St. Mark xii. 35–37, where it is true that in a sense the question turns upon the Davidic authorship: "David himself calleth Him Lord; and whence is He his Son?" Now in Psalm cx. we have a poem which appears clearly to be not the composition of a king, but rather, in view of its primary reference, a composition framed *in honour of* the reigning king of David's line, whom the writer designates as "my lord," the ordinary title of respect applied to human dignitaries. It cannot, however, be supposed that our Lord intended to settle for all time the question of the authorship of the Psalm, so as to render *de fide* the acceptance of the traditional view as against the critical view. The purpose of His quotation is "not to prove or disprove anything, to affirm or to deny anything, but simply to press upon the Pharisees an argument which their habitual assumptions ought to have suggested to them: to confront them with just that question which they, with their principles, ought to have been asking themselves."[1] While, however, it is true that, upon the acceptance of the critical position, the argument in its narrower reference to the particular passage in question could not to-day be employed, yet in its wider application our Lord is enunciating a truth which must tend to come more vividly into prominence the more closely the Old Testament is studied;[2] viz. that the Messianic Son of David is pictured in prophecy in such

[1] GORE, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 198. Cf. carefully the whole discussion of the passage, pp. 196 ff.

[2] Cf. the argument of this essay, pp. 182 ff.

language as can only be fulfilled in the Person of One who is Divine as well as human.

Nor, again, can our Lord's reference to Jonah as a type of Himself be thought to set seal to the historical truth of the story of Jonah, unless it can be shown that allegory is an unfitting medium for the conveyance of divine teaching. If, as is probable, Jonah represents the nation of Israel emerging as though by a miracle from the Exile in order to carry out its mission to the world at large,[1] it may be noticed that the idea of the restoration from the Exile as a resurrection is elsewhere current in the prophetic writings,[2] and that it is thus highly fitting that the allegory of the death and resurrection of the nation should be also the allegory of the death and resurrection of the nation's true Representative.

The statement of St. Matthew xii. 41, St. Luke xi. 32 appears, it is true, to bring into consideration a question of fact: "The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here." It may be noticed that this passage is really not affected by the critical view of the book of Jonah, because the *probabilities* of the case are in favour of a historical basis for the story, such as the fact of the mission of Jonah to Nineveh.[3] But the principle which we are endeavouring to illustrate has its application here as elsewhere. The import of our Lord's statement does not turn upon the historical truth of the repentance of the men of Nineveh. They are but an illustration of the fact that men in bygone times have turned from sin to God at the preaching of those who

[1] Cf. HUNTER, *After the Exile*, vol. ii. chap. iii., or the present writer's *Outlines of Old Testament Theology*, pp. 116 f.

[2] Cf. p. 195 of the present essay.

[3] The fact that the prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a historical person may be inferred from the allusion in 2 Kings xiv. 25.

were merely God's messengers, and thus they serve to pass condemnation upon those who were deliberately hardening their hearts against the conviction which should have been borne in upon them by the preaching and personality of Jesus Christ.

In the case of Deuteronomy, however, it has been urged that if the book is "in point of fact nothing better than a pious forgery of the age of Jeremiah," its use by our Lord "involves an unfavourable judgment, not merely of His intellectual claims, but of the penetration and delicacy of His moral sense"; because His moral perceptions were "not sufficiently fine to miss the consistency, the ring of truth, in a document which professed to have come from the great Law-giver with a Divine authority; while, according to modern writers, it was only the 'pious' fiction of a later age, and its falsehood had only not been admitted by its author lest its 'effect' should be counteracted."[1]

This argument involves a misapprehension. The modern critical theory does not regard Deuteronomy as a "pious forgery" or "fiction." The writer makes use of an older legislation, and reformulates it in accordance with the needs of his times. The antiquity of the great bulk of the laws of Deuteronomy can be proved;[2] while "such laws as are really new are but the logical and consistent development of Mosaic principles."

If the author adopts the dramatic method and allows Moses to expound the spirit of this legislation, of which he is the source, and to bring out its application to the religious needs of the age, there is no shade of dishonesty

[1] LIDDON, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 477 f.

[2] Many of the laws find their parallel in the ancient "Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xx. 23–xxiii. 33), whilst others can be paralleled in "the Law of Holiness" (Lev. xvii.–xxvi. 26), the presumption in this latter case being that both codes have drawn independently from a common older source. Cf. DRIVER on *Deuteronomy*, *Introduction*, § 2, where a synopsis of the laws is exhibited.

in his intention, nor is his work to be stigmatised as a "forgery."[1] And certainly his moral earnestness, and "the ring of truth" in his words, cannot fail to strike the reader, whatever view be taken of the circumstances under which the book was produced.

We conclude, then, that our Lord's use of the Old Testament sets no barrier to the free employment of the methods of historical criticism by the biblical student of to-day. Rather, His emphasis on the spirit as distinct from the letter of Scripture, and the characteristics of His own teaching—the going back to the fountain-head of the writings themselves, and the speaking with the authority

[1] Dr. Driver's statement of the manner in which all Hebrew legislation was regarded as Mosaic is singularly illuminative:—"All Hebrew legislation, both civil and ceremonial, was (as a fact) derived ultimately from Moses, though a comparison of the different codes in the Pentateuch shows that the laws cannot all in their present form be Mosaic; the Mosaic nucleus was expanded and developed in various directions, as national life became more complex and religious ideas matured. Nevertheless, all Hebrew laws are formulated under Moses' name—a fact which shows that there was a *continuous Mosaic tradition*, embracing a moral, a ceremonial, and a civil element. The new laws, or extensions of old laws, which as time went on were seen to be desirable, were accommodated to this tradition, and incorporated into it, being afterwards enforced by the priestly or civil authority, as the case might be. Those who concede the existence of such a practice on the part of Hebrew legislators will find it removes difficulties which the critical view of Deuteronomy may otherwise present. If it was the habit thus to identify the stream with the source and to connect old laws, extended or modified, or even new laws, with the name of the original law-giver, then the attribution of the laws in Deuteronomy to Moses ceases to be a proceeding out of harmony with the ideas and practice of the Hebrew nation. It is no fraudulent invocation of the legislator's name: it is simply another application of an established custom." Cf. also, on the dramatic method of the writer of Deuteronomy:—"No elaborate literary machinery was needed by him: a single character would suffice. He places Moses on the stage, and exhibits him pleading his case with the degenerate Israel of Josiah's day. In doing this, he assumes no unjustifiable liberty, and makes no unfair use of Moses' name; he does not invest him with a fictitious character; he does not claim his authority for ends which he would have disavowed; he merely develops, with great moral energy and rhetorical power, and in a form adapted to the age in which he lived himself, principles which Moses had beyond all question advocated, and arguments which he would have cordially accepted as his own." *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, pp. lvi. f., lviii. f. The whole section on the date of the book should be carefully consulted.

derived from personal investigation, untrammelled by the traditional methods of the scribes—mark out the pathway which the Old Testament student must endeavour in all humility to follow. And it is still possible for the student to gain inspiration from the belief that this pathway may be the road which leads him to Emmaus, and that the risen Lord may be his companion, enlightening his mind where it is dull and slow to understand, and interpreting to him in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

V.

MODERN CRITICISM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

By W. C. ALLEN

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Inspiration not confined to the Bible, but found there to an extent in which it is present in no other literature. The term therefore conveniently limited to the Bible. In the Old Testament the conception of revelation follows naturally upon a consciousness of the Divine Being as experienced in the individual life, in nature, and in history 238

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THE two words "biblical criticism" suggest to different classes of people very different trains of ideas. To some, chiefly to those whose knowledge of critics and criticism is drawn only from apologetic writings, they

carry with them a dark and sinister meaning.[1] To such persons biblical critics are relentless foes of Christianity, who spend their lives in fruitless efforts to undermine the foundations of the Christian faith. Their endeavours are indeed futile, because the ecclesiastical traditions against which they direct their attacks are an integral part of the Christian revelation, and therefore cannot be permanently shaken. But in the meantime faith is distressed, devotion harassed, and the members of Christ's Church needlessly frightened.

To others, again, the words suggest freedom and liberty. Freedom from outworn creeds, liberty from antiquated and exploded beliefs. To these, biblical critics are the pioneers of scientific progress, who are doing much to free the mind of man from the shackles of an obsolete dogmatism. Their work is indeed not yet complete, because erroneous beliefs die hard, and views about the Bible which have ceased to be scientifically tenable, still darken the atmosphere of men's lives.[2] But in the meantime the foundations of the temple of liberty have been laid, and though the building be incomplete, men are everywhere pressing into it.

To yet a third class literary criticism of the Bible presents itself neither as the foe of Christianity nor as its conqueror, but rather as its ally. It comes to them in the guise not of a dreaded enemy, much less of a victorious enemy, but rather as a long-desired and gladly welcomed friend. To such, belief in the inspiration of

[1] To a writer in the *Guardian* (January 16th, 1901, p. 95) the presence of modern criticism in the Church is "an abiding menace," and Bishop Gore speaks of the suspicion amongst the more intellectual laity that "criticism has proved fatal to orthodoxy."—*The Pilot*, iv. 75.

[2] "The time has come when as a supernatural revelation they (the Hebrew Books) should be frankly though reverently laid aside, and no more allowed to cloud the vision of free inquiry, or to cast the shadow of primæval religion and law over our modern life."—GOLDWIN SMITH, *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*, 94.

the Bible, so far from being shaken by a century of criticism, has been greatly strengthened by it. They believe in the Bible not in spite of criticism, but because of it; not under protest against it, but by reason of it; not although criticism has shown that certain views of inspiration are untenable, but just because this has been the case.

It has been the writer's happy and delightful lot to be obliged to spend some years in the critical study of the New Testament. In the following pages he proposes to summarise the results of the literary criticism of the past century, and then to urge that such results, so far from being destructive of a belief in the permanent religious value of the New Testament, are the soil in which it finds nourishment and strength.

A.—SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF CRITICISM

THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS

(a) *Their Composition.*—The view current in the Christian Church since the beginning of the second century is that St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke wrote independently the Gospels called by their names.[1] This view still has its adherents, but they diminish in numbers daily. And indeed the theory is beset with difficulties which cannot be explained away.

It has become clear to most students that the literary connection between these Gospels is so close that we must fall back upon some theory of mutual dependence of one writer upon another. The form in which this theory has won wide approval maintains the priority of St. Mark, and the use of his work by the writers of the first and third Gospels. From this point of view it might be said that the authors of St. Matthew and St. Luke have re-

[1] IRENÆUS, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1; CLEM. ALEX. ap. EUS., *H. E.*, iii. 24; TERT., *Adv. Marc*, iv. 5, Muratorian Canon.

edited and enlarged St. Mark. But there is a second link of connection between them. A careful examination of the sayings recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke in common reveals the fact that many of them must be drawn from a common written source, used by them side by side with St. Mark. In other words, the authors of St. Matthew and St. Luke have re-edited St. Mark, using his narrative as the framework of their history, and working into it sayings drawn from their second source. This account of the composition of the Gospels, generally called the *Two Document Theory*, is so widely represented in England, in Germany, and in America, that it may be said to hold the field.[1] The great majority of recent writers adopt it. Unfortunately it does not completely account for the many complex features presented by the Gospels. Consequently almost every writer finds it necessary to make additions to it, in order to account for some of the unsolved problems of the literary features of these writings. Many scholars believe that St. Luke borrowed not only from the two sources used also by St. Matthew but also from another documentary source, which he often preferred to those which he had in common with St. Matthew. One distinguished German writer[2] believes that the volume of *Sayings* used afterwards by St. Matthew and St. Luke had already been used and sometimes altered by St. Mark, and that the two later evangelists sometimes revert to the original source in preference to St. Mark. This would explain their agreement in cases where they differ from St. Mark. Others again believe that St. Luke had seen and to some extent used St. Matthew.[3] But, apart from

[1] In England, Sanday, Plummer, Bruce, Hawkins, Burkitt, Moffatt; in Germany, Weiss, Holtzmann, Wendt, Jülicher, Wernle, Soltau, and many others; in America, Gould, McGiffert, Bacon; in Holland, Baljon.

[2] WEISS, *Introduction*, ii. 219 ff. Lond., 1888.

[3] SIMONS, *Hat der dritte Evangelist den Kanonischen Matthäus benutzt?* and recently in a modified form, ZIMMERMANN, *Stud. und Krit.*, 1901, iii. 435.

these amplifications of the main theory, it may be said that it is widely regarded as an established result that the writers of the first and third Gospels have made use of two main sources, one being St. Mark's Gospel, the other a collection of sayings of Christ.

(b) *Authorship and Date.*—Upon these points the criticism of the last two decades has been steadily tending in a conservative direction. The great majority of writers are agreed that our first three Gospels must fall within the first century. The few who think that St. Matthew and St. Luke may be later would not venture to carry them many years later than 100 A.D. On the whole there is very good reason for supposing that they were all written before rather than after this date.[1]

As regards authorship, the objections which are raised in some quarters to the traditional view that the second Gospel is the work of John Mark are very inconclusive. Those to the Lucan authorship of the third Gospel are possibly deserving of a little more consideration, while the difficulties felt with regard to the authorship of the first Gospel are much more serious. In its present form this last cannot be apostolic. It is a composite work based upon written sources. But it is just in its connection with these sources that the tradition that St. Matthew wrote it finds its explanation. This tradition is in all probability founded upon a statement made by Papias, who was Bishop of Hierapolis in the first half of the second century. His statement is quoted by the Church historian, Eusebius,[2] and is to the effect that "Matthew composed the Logia in Hebrew and everyone interpreted them as he could." Now it is clear that this statement cannot apply to our Gospel as it now exists. It is not written in Hebrew, nor is it a translation of a

[1] See the conspectus of dates in MOFFATT, *Historical New Testament*, 273.
[2] EUS., *H. E.*, iii. 39.

Hebrew work. And the term *Logia*, i.e. *Oracles*, or *Sayings*, would be a very unsuitable word to describe so carefully articulated a theological treatise in narrative form as our Gospel. But the volume of *Sayings* used by the writer of St. Matthew may well have been a translation of St. Matthew's Hebrew Logia, and, if so, the name of the Apostle might not unnaturally be transferred from the original work to the Gospel in which so much of that work lies embedded.

(c) *Their historical value.*—It is perhaps hardly necessary to emphasise the principle that the historical value of the Gospels must depend upon the character of the sources used by them, upon the circumstances of their composition, and upon their date. In all three respects a favourable verdict must be passed upon the first three Gospels.

ST. MARK

(a) *Sources.*—Of sources of St. Mark it is hardly possible to speak. Attempts to find traces of written sources in his Gospel have not yet won any general assent.[1] The Church in the second century believed that his Gospel contained reminiscences of the preaching of St. Peter, and there is very little to be set against this tradition.[2] But in any case the admittedly early date of the

[1] The attempt of B. Weiss to prove that Mark used the Logia has been referred to above. The view that in chapter xiii. a Jewish Christian writing of an apocalyptic character has been combined with sayings of Christ has found wider recognition. Cf. MENZIES, *The Earliest Gospel*, p. 232; MOFFATT, *Historical New Testament*, p. 637, and the references there given.

[2] The tradition occurs first in Papias, quoted in EUS., *H. E.*, iii. 39. "And this the elder said. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down accurately, but not in order, whatever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord, nor followed him, but at a later time [followed] Peter, who used to adapt his teachings to the necessities [of circumstances], but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's words. So that Mark made no mistake in having written what he remembered. For he gave heed to one thing, not to omit anything that he had heard, nor to make any false statement." This tradition is repeated by the Church writers at the end of the second century, *e.g.* IRENÆUS (*Adv.*

Gospel and the character of its contents stamp it as of first-rate importance, for it shows clearly its dependence upon Church tradition in its fragmentariness, its incompleteness, the absence from it of any special pleading. The writer plainly has no other purpose than that of putting into permanent form such incidents of Christ's life as were well known amongst those for whom he wrote. He is no historian or biographer in the modern sense of the words. Rather he is sketching the main facts which underlay the faith of the Christian Church in Jesus Christ, and which justified their faith in Him. His writing everywhere presupposes the Church and its tradition. Behind the outline of facts recorded rises the picture of the Christian Society, its faith, its institutions, its worship, its ordinances. If this be kept in mind the literary features of the Gospel become everywhere intelligible, but if this be forgotten the book becomes a literary riddle.

(b) *Date.*—This dependence of the second Gospel upon Christian tradition becomes emphasised in importance when consideration is taken of its early date. With practical unanimity critical writers place it between the years 65 A.D. and 80 A.D. Most scholars would prefer a date before rather than after the fall of Jerusalem, That is to say, the Gospel was probably written within forty years of the death of Christ and in the lifetime of some who had lived in His companionship. This being the case, it is difficult to suppose that the facts here related about Jesus of Nazareth, which come to us on the authority of no single writer, but as the expression of the common belief of the Christian Society, are not in the main accurately recorded. At the same time, it must be admitted that the relation of the Gospel to the Church, whilst it is on the one hand

Hær., iii. 1, 1), who supposed Mark's work to have been composed after the death of St. Peter, and Clement of Alexandria, quoted in Eus., *H. E.* vi., 14, who, on the contrary, believed that it was written at Rome during St. Peter's lifetime.

a guarantee of the general truthfulness of the facts recorded, is from another point of view a reminder that these facts must almost inevitably have been coloured by the Church's belief. The impression made by the life of Jesus Christ upon His disciples, and upon the members of the Christian Churches, was so great, the conviction of His supernatural character so startling, that any attempt to describe what He said and what He did during His earthly life, could not but be influenced by convictions which gathered round His person, when it was possible to reflect upon His life as a whole. It is impossible within the limits of this essay to attempt to estimate the extent to which the facts of Christ's life have been thus affected. In this Gospel such modification has probably been very small. There were men still living when the book was written whose presence in the Church would prove invaluable as a corrective of mistaken modification of the actual facts. But whatever may be the extent to which it has been carried, the existence of such modification is in itself an invaluable proof of the conviction of Christ's superhuman nature left upon the minds of the disciples as the result of His life. How far were they right in their conviction? Do the facts of the life of Christ necessarily lead to so far-reaching an explanation of them? Historical evidence is powerless to answer such questions as these. In other words, no amount of external witness is sufficient to prove or to disprove them. Of that the author of the fourth Gospel was well aware when he represented the Lord as appealing in proof of His divine nature, not only to the witness of the Baptist,[1] of the Old Testament,[2] and of His own works,[3] but also to the witness of God the Father,[4] and of the Holy Spirit.[5]

The case is somewhat different with regard to the first

[1] v. 33. [2] v. 39. [3] v. 36. [4] v. 37. [5] xv. 26.

and third Gospels. Here criticism has been successful in distinguishing between the Gospels in their present form and the sources upon which they are based.

ST. MATTHEW

(a) *Sources.*—The first Gospel is largely based upon St. Mark. With some few exceptions and with some changes of order, which can be accounted for without difficulty, the editor has inserted into his Gospel the whole of St. Mark's writing. But he is no mere copyist. Throughout the whole of these Marcan sections as they reappear in the first Gospel runs a series of minute alterations—alterations in style, alterations in phraseology, alterations in fact, omissions, additions. These changes, with a few exceptions, bear the stamp of literary improvements rather than that of changes made on the ground of better information. They belong to that class of variation which is always found in the later of two accounts of the same event, when the second writer has no more authentic information than his predecessor. In some cases they are due to a desire to soften passages in St. Mark at which offence had been taken. In others they are due to the literary scheme of the first Gospel, changes inevitably forcing their way into the narrative when an incident was removed from its original setting in St. Mark to suit the plan upon which the writer of the first Gospel built up his work. In all cases where matter is common to both Gospels St. Mark must be regarded as not only earlier in point of time, but also as more accurate in point of detail, and St. Matthew not only as secondary in respect of dependence, but also as inferior in respect of the faithful transmission of historical fact.

But besides the material borrowed from St. Mark, the first Gospel contains a considerable amount of additional matter, for much of which modern criticism finds a source

in the Matthæan Logia. The task of disentangling these apostolic fragments is a difficult one, but when it has been achieved we are in possession of a source for Christ's teaching which is of priceless value. It seems probable that the larger number of the sayings in the first Gospel, excluding those borrowed from St. Mark, were drawn from the Logia; they come, that is to say, from an apostolic collection of Christ's sayings, which can hardly have been composed later than the year 70 A.D., and which in all probability is very much earlier. No doubt they have been modified in transmission. They had to undergo the process of translation from Aramaic into Greek before they came into the hands of the editor of the first Gospel. And when they reached him it seems to have been in the form of detached sayings, often without historical setting. This explains (*a*) why the editor of the first Gospel has interpolated into speeches in St. Mark sayings which are of the same character as the surrounding verses in St. Mark, but which cannot have been spoken on the particular occasion which St. Mark is describing;[1] (*b*) why he has massed together these sayings into great groups of discourse;[2] (*c*) why a saying which in St. Matthew occurs in one connection is sometimes found in a different connection in St. Luke, and not infrequently is used to illustrate different lessons in the two Gospels.[3] The Lord's sayings in the earliest sources seem to have been preserved either in the form of a parable or in connection with a miracle, or as short detached oracles. In our

[1] Cf. Mark vi. 8–11 with Matthew x. 5–42. Some of the verses in Matthew cannot have been spoken on the occasion referred to, *e.g.* verses 17–23 were no doubt spoken on some other occasion with reference to the apostolic preaching after Christ's death.

[2] Cf. especially chapters v.–vii., x., xiii., xviii., xxiv.–xxv. In large measure these are compilations of shorter groups of sayings.

[3] *e.g.* the Lord's Prayer in Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount (vi. 9–13), in Luke in another connection (xi. 1–4). The sayings in Matthew v. 25, 26 teach the necessity of reconciliation to one's fellow-men; but in Luke xii. 58–9 the same sayings command a speedy reconciliation to God.

Canonical Gospels they have been combined and woven together into discourses, sometimes of considerable length. The process can be watched by comparing St. Mark with the later Gospels. But even in St. Mark this process of combination has been at work. There are indications, *e.g.*, that the sayings in iv. 2–32 were not, as it would appear to a careless reader, all spoken on the same day, and the section chapter ix. 35–50 is no doubt composite.

After removing from the first Gospel the matter found also in St. Mark and the sayings drawn from the Logia, there remain the narratives of the Infancy and some incidents and sayings scattered over the Gospel, the most important being the account of the appearance of Christ after His resurrection and the details concerning it.

We may regard all these narratives as due to the editor of the Gospel, in so far as it cannot be proved that he borrowed them from any known historical source. The question therefore arises, Do the circumstances of the composition of the Gospel predispose us to take a favourable view of the historical character of these narratives for which no earlier source can be found? This is a difficult question to answer. On the one hand it may be urged that, like St. Mark, the writer of the first Gospel is plainly giving expression to the general tradition of the Church of his own day. That is true; but on the other hand the first Gospel represents this tradition at a later stage of development than does the second. And it is quite clear that as the years passed there was a tendency to modify the traditions with regard to the Lord's sayings and actions. This is illustrated in the change which has passed over St. Mark's narrative when it reappears in St. Matthew. The later writer omits clauses which might seem to attribute failure or lack of power to Christ.[1] He omits also phrases de-

[1] Cf. Matthew's omission of Mark i. 45 (Jesus could no more openly enter into a city), vi. 48 (and He would have passed by them), vii. 24 (He could not

scriptive of Christ's human emotions.[1] And lastly he omits the questions which St. Mark put into the mouth of Christ in all cases where such questions might seem to imply ignorance on the part of the Lord.[2]

Again, it might be urged in favour of some of the incidents found only in St. Matthew that their nature sufficiently explains the fact that they do not occur in the earliest sources. The narratives of the Infancy, *e.g.*, owing to their nature, would be withheld from publicity until special circumstances called for their disclosure.[3] On the other hand, it is not difficult to raise objections to such an explanation. The historical character of these narratives would, we cannot but feel, be less open to question if some trace of knowledge of the facts which they present could be found in St. Paul or in the earlier Gospel sources, *e.g.* St. Mark. Moreover, in view of the tendency to modify tradition, which has been referred to, it is easy to suggest tendencies which may have assisted such modification in these particular narratives. In general there would be the tendency to minimise the purely human element in Christ's person, and to exaggerate the Divine—to represent his whole life less in the light of the fact that He was Jesus of Nazareth, and more in the light of St. Paul's presentation of Him as the pre-existent Son of God. In particular there would be the almost inevitable wish to represent the entry into the sphere of human things

be hid), ix. 30 (He would not that any should know it), xi. 13 (if haply He might find; it was not the season of figs); and cf. Mark vi. 5 (He could do there no mighty work) with Matthew xiii. 58 (He did not do many mighty works), and Mark xiv. 58 (I will destroy) with Matthew xxvi. 61 (I can destroy).

[1] Cf. Matthew's omission of Mark iii. 5 (with anger, being grieved), vi. 6 (He marvelled), i. 43 (ἐμβριμησάμενος), viii. 12 (sighed deeply), x. 14 (was moved with indignation), x. 21 (loved).

[2] Cf. Matthew's omission of Mark v. 9, 30; vi. 38; ix. 12 (how has it been written), 16, 21, 33; xiv. 14. Cf. also viii. 12, 19, 20; x. 3, with parallels in Matthew.

[3] See GORE, *Dissertations*, 12–40.

of One so exalted as unique, and the ready vehicle for the satisfaction of this desire in that idea of miraculous birth which has fascinated the minds of men in all parts of the world from the earliest times. Again there would be the tendency to find in the life of Christ exact fulfilment of prominent Old Testament prophecies. It may be true that in Isaiah vii. 14 the word translated *virgin* had not given rise to the expectation of a Messiah born of a virgin, but that is no reason at all why the Christian Church at the end of the century should not have felt that it would be fitting if the ἡ παρθένος of the Greek Old Testament had found its literal fulfilment in the mother of the Lord. There are signs elsewhere in the first Gospel that in the atmosphere of Christian thought which it represents this desire to find exact fulfilment of prophecy sometimes exercised a modifying influence upon the accounts of incidents in Christ's life. Considerations such as these have led a certain number of modern critical writers to regard the narratives with which we are dealing as the creation of the Church's reflective consciousness, and the product of her adoration of Christ. It seems to the present writer that the time is not yet fully come for passing any definite judgment in the matter. This much is clear, that those narratives in St. Matthew which are not drawn from St. Mark, and which cannot be assigned to the Logia, do not stand upon the same level of historical value as the second Gospel and the Logia sections in St. Matthew and St. Luke. There are two plain reasons for this statement. In the first place these narratives, if not later in substance than St. Mark and the Logia, appear for the first time in later Gospels; and in the case of the Matthew narratives at least the writer who records them can be proved to show a tendency to modify any earlier sources which he has used. But if this be admitted, the further question whether the incidents recorded were or were not

substantially true in point of fact, in spite of the lateness of their attestation, still remains open. It may be urged that a comparison with St. Mark leads to a very favourable view of the writer of the first Gospel as an editor who, in broad outline, faithfully reproduced his sources; that the incidents recorded in these narratives must have been a commonplace of the Church tradition which he represents; and that that tradition, with all due allowance for some amount of working up in literary form and setting, must be regarded as having preserved a substantial kernel of actual historical and concrete fact.

ST. LUKE

Much that has been said of the first Gospel may be taken as applying also to the third. As in St. Matthew, the main sources are St. Mark and the Logia. St. Luke follows the order of the second Gospel, but has prefixed two chapters of introduction, added some accounts of Christ's appearances after the Resurrection, and inserted into St. Mark's narrative a good deal of parable and discourse material, the most noticeable being the two sections vi. 20 to viii. 3 and ix. 51 to xviii. 14. Much of this no doubt came from the Logia, but some, in particular some passages in the so-called Peræan section, ix. 51 to xviii. 14, is often thought to have been derived from a third source. Writers who think that St. Luke used such a special source for the most part hold that he gave it the preference over his other sources, and some believe that he has also used it in composing the first half of the Acts.[1] If it be ever possible to reconstruct this special source with any certainty, we shall then have three primary sources for the history of the life of Christ: (*a*) St. Mark, (*b*) the Discourses of St. Matthew, (*c*) St. Luke's special source. The

[1] FEINE, *Eine vorkanonische Ueberlieferung des Lk.*, 1891; B. WEISS in "Luke" in MEYER'S *Kom.*, 257, 9 Aufl.

first two must be earlier than the year 70 A.D., the third may be later, but St. Luke seems to have valued it highly, and the parables which presumably come from it approve themselves as of the same level of historical value as the miracles and parables of St. Mark and the Logia. Some writers have endeavoured to find traces of a connection between St. Luke's special source and the Court of Herod.[1]

So far we have dealt with the Synoptic Gospels alone. It is now necessary to summarise very briefly the results of critical examination of the remaining books. It would, of course, be possible to present an imposing list of names of scholars who defend the traditional authorship of every writing of the New Testament. In England, Dr. Sanday (with some reservation in the case of 2 Peter) and Dr. Salmon; in Germany, Drs. B. Weiss and T. Zahn; in Switzerland, the late Professor Godet, have all made contributions to the defence of tradition, which represent the high-water mark of scholarship. But those who read this paper will wish to know, not how many great names can be ranged on the side of tradition, but whether scholars of repute and judgment find reason to question this tradition, and if so to what extent they reject it. It will, therefore, be advisable to point out as briefly as may be the extent to which criticism still questions the traditional authorship of the remaining books of the New Testament.

Of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles it may be said that it is generally admitted that it is the work of the writer who composed the third Gospel. It is also admitted that it must date from the close of the first, or from the early years of the second century. Harnack gives as a probable date 78–93,[2] Wendt 95–100,[3] Jülicher 100–105,[4] McGiffert 81–96,[5] Moffatt

[1] PLUMMER, *St. Luke*, xxv.
[2] *Chronol.*, i. 250.
[3] MEYER'S *Kom.*, 40.
[4] *Einl.*, 262.
[5] *Apost. Age*, 437.

"the middle period of the reign of Domitian,"[1] Schmiedel 105–130.[2] On the other hand, there is a tendency amongst critical writers to deny the Lucan authorship of both books. So Jülicher, Schmiedel, McGiffert, Moffatt. The objections raised to the authorship of St. Luke are not very convincing, and it is important to notice that in any case the sections of the Acts in which the first person is used (the so-called *we-sections*)[3] must almost certainly be attributed to him. But it does not very much matter whether he did or did not write the entire work (Gospel-Acts). The author has certainly made use of written sources in the Gospel, and there is a presumption that he did the same in the Acts. The work of historical criticism in examining the value of these sources and of the whole work cannot be dispensed with, whether St. Luke or some other were the writer. Only in the latter part of the Acts would his authorship as that of an eye-witness give to the narrative a value which it would not otherwise possess. In truth, the general agreement of critics as to the date of the Acts is of very much more importance than their partial disagreement as to its authorship. Written at the end of the first century, *i.e.* within seventy years of the earliest event which it records, it is quite clearly an attempt to sketch in a straightforward and unprejudiced manner the history of the Christian Church to the period of St. Paul's Roman imprisonment. The writer, whether he were St. Luke or another, may have made mistakes in details, he may have sometimes given a onesided impression of an event or series of events; but the general reader will always believe that a book of so early a date, written in so unpretentious a style, is worthy of regard as in the main a trustworthy historical witness, and in that belief he will probably

[1] *Historical New Testament*, 418. [2] *Encycl. Bib.*, i. 50.
[3] xvi. 10–17, xx. 5–16, xxi. 1–8, xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16.

always have the support of the main body of serious historical students.

When we pass to the Pauline Epistles we find that the twentieth century opens with a very wide agreement as regards their genuineness. On the one hand, it is now almost universally acknowledged that the Epistle to the Hebrews dates from the first century and is by an unknown author. On the other hand, doubts as to the authorship of the remaining letters have gradually been narrowed in scope until they affect at all seriously only one or two Epistles. There is a very widely spread feeling that the so-called Pastoral Epistles may indeed contain Pauline elements, but are not in their present form genuine letters of the Apostle.[1] And there are individual scholars who find difficulty in accepting the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians,[2] Colossians,[3] and Ephesians,[4] although the general tendency amongst critical writers is in the direction of maintaining the authenticity of all three writings.

With regard to the writings ascribed to St. John, it can hardly be said that criticism has reached any assured results. Those who defend the traditional authorship of the Gospel rely upon the strength of the second-century evidence in its favour, and endeavour to show that the internal evidence of the Gospel is not unfavourable to it. On the other hand, critics who deny the apostolic authorship point to features of the Gospel which, as they suppose, are incompatible with it, and endeavour to minimise the weight of the second-century tradition in its favour. It must be admitted that, in ignorance of the tradition, no

[1] WEIZSÄCKER, *Apost. Age*, i. 218, Lond., 1894; HOLTZMANN, *Einl.*, 272–92; HARNACK, *Chronol.*, 480; JÜLICHER, *Einl.*, 112 ff.; MCGIFFERT, *Apost. Age*, 398 ff.; BACON, *Introduction*, 130 ff.; MOFFATT, *Hist. New Test.*, 556–63.

[2] Weizsäcker, Hilgenfeld, Holtzmann.

[3] Weizsäcker.

[4] Weizsäcker, Holtzmann, Schmiedel.

modern scholar would be likely to ascribe the Gospel in its present form to one of the twelve Apostles. The entire representation of Christ's person and teaching is very different from that of the Synoptic Gospels, and seems to represent a later stage of tradition. In St. Mark, *e.g.*, Christ is depicted as One who seemed to shrink from proclaiming His Messiahship; who in the early part of His ministry charged those whom He healed to tell no man, and forbade the demons to speak because they knew that He was the Christ; who gradually unfolded the doctrine of His divinity, and then only to His disciples. But in the fourth Gospel we have One who is introduced to us in the first chapter as the Logos of God, and who from the very beginning of His ministry proclaims Himself as the Son of God. Again, in the Synoptic Gospels the subject-matter of the Lord's teaching is the kingdom of heaven—its privilege, its responsibilities, the necessary qualifications of its citizens—whilst the expression of this teaching is cast in parable and in short saying; but in the fourth Gospel we have instead long discourses, which revolve ever round one theme—the Person of Christ, and what that meant to the disciples and the world. There are a number of other points in the Gospel which suggest a late stage of Gospel tradition, of which two only can be alluded to here.[1] There is the fact, *e.g.*, that the writer seems to have made use of the Synoptic Gospels; and again that other fact, that in the Prologue he seems to show acquaintance with the Alexandrian speculative philosophy, which is best represented for us in the writings of Philo. Lastly, there is the general impression made upon many modern readers that the Gospel is the work of one who, looking back upon the life of Christ over many years

[1] Cf. the summary of features which suggest a late date in Moffatt, 495–497, but only long and careful study of the Gospel can make it possible to estimate at their true worth the points which are there raised. WENDT'S *Das Johannesevangelium*, pp. 1–43, is deserving of notice in this connection.

of Church development, is recasting that life in the light of the experience gained during a long period of Christian life and thought. It is easy to say that if we suppose St. John to have lived to an advanced age, all these points find their solution. But is that really the case? Is there not between John the son of Zebedee, the eye-witness of the life of Christ on the one hand, and the Christian philosopher and theologian who wrote this Gospel on the other, a gulf in respect of time and thought and relation to historic fact which it is difficult to bridge?

Those who defend the apostolic authorship give a negative answer to questions like this, and appeal to the verdict of history in the second-century tradition. At first sight this seems very convincing. At the end of the second century Irenæus states that the Gospel was written at Ephesus by John, the disciple of the Lord.[1] Now Irenæus in his youth had seen Polycarp,[2] and of Polycarp it is recorded that he had had intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord.[3] In other words, the belief current in the Church at the end of the second century, that John the son of Zebedee wrote the fourth Gospel, seems to find in Polycarp its connecting link with the Apostle himself. And yet those who on internal grounds are sure that the Gospel is not in its present form the work of an Apostle, find a way of escape from the authority of this early tradition. In a fragment of Papias preserved by Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 39, mention is made of John the Presbyter, who seems to be distinct from John the Apostle. It is urged that the whole second-century tradition which ascribes the Gospel to the Apostle is due to a confusion of Apostle and Elder. Either there were at Ephesus towards the close of the second century two Johns—John the son of Zebedee, and at a later period John the Elder, the teacher of Polycarp—or John the son

[1] *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1, 1. [2] *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, 4. [3] Eus., *H. E.*, v. 20.

of Zebedee was never there at all, and the assertions of his residence there are due to a mistaken confusion of him with his namesake the Elder. As a result of the uncertainty which these considerations introduce into the external evidence, and of the indications afforded by the Gospel itself of its late date, many scholars of reputation feel themselves obliged to abandon or modify the traditional authorship of the Gospel.[1] Some believe that the Gospel is based upon Johannine tradition, so, *e.g.*, Wendt,[2] who endeavours to discover a Johannine written source worked over by the composer of the Gospel in its present form. In respect of date there is considerable unanimity; 150 A.D. is the extreme limit on the one side, and most writers would prefer 100 A.D.[3] The authorship will perhaps always remain an open question determined in different directions by different scholars on subjective grounds. Conservatives will always argue that they find it difficult to believe that in the main the sayings of the fourth Gospel do not represent the teaching of the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels, and that if this is so the Johannine authorship accounts for their preservation in the Church as no rival theory can do.

Of the Apocalypse of St. John two statements may be made with some certainty: it was composed in the first century and it is largely based upon earlier sources. The latter fact is not easily harmonised with apostolic authorship, and the style of the book is so different from that of the Gospel that the two can hardly be supposed to come from the same author. But of course if the Gospel be regarded as Johannine, not as it now exists, but only in the sense that it is based upon Johannine tradition, the

[1] Weizsäcker, ii. 260 ff.; Holtzmann, *Einl.*, 3rd ed., 453 ff.; Harnack, 659 ff.; McGiffert, 614 ff.; Jülicher, 251 ff.

[2] *Das Johannesevangelium*, 1900.

[3] Harnack gives 80–110 A.D.; Jülicher, 100–125 A.D.

objections to the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse would be lessened.

With regard to the "*Catholic*" *Epistles* not a few critical writers are agreed as to the impossibility of maintaining their apostolic authorship. The adverse evidence is most convincing in the case of 2 Peter. It is not possible to present this here in detail, and different aspects of it will affect differently constituted minds in different ways. But the following are some of the more important arguments against the authenticity of the letter: (1) No trace of the letter can be found in the early Church until the third century. It is difficult to explain the silence of the second century, if the letter were written by the Apostle about the middle of the first century. (2) The author has borrowed from the Epistle of Jude. This literary dependence is almost inconceivable in one who occupied the position of the Apostle Peter. (3) The author seems to speak of St. Paul's Epistles as though they were already regarded as on a level with "the other Scriptures." On these and on other grounds the opinion that the Epistle really belongs to the second century has been winning many adherents. Even in England there are now some who feel that the case against the letter is very strong. Dr. Sanday, in 1893, expressed this with wise and reverent caution and sobriety.[1] And in the third volume of Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* (1900) Dr. Chase, after a long and exhaustive examination of the evidence, sums up against the authenticity of the Epistle.

Probably most English writers would admit the difficulties which surround the apostolic authorship of this letter, but would, however, hold that these difficulties are overwhelmingly greater than those raised in the case of any of the other Epistles. In Germany, however, and

[1] *Inspiration*, 348.

in America, scholars of admitted ability assign all the "Catholic" Epistles to the early years of the second century,[1] and it seems not unlikely that this view will win an increasing number of adherents in spite of the staunch defence made by conservative writers, *e.g.* by E. B. Mayor of the authenticity of James,[2] by Dr. Bigg of 1 and 2 Peter and Jude (*Intern. Crit. Com.*), and by Zahn[3] of all these Epistles.

Thus we may conclude (*a*) that scholars of all shades of opinion are agreed that the four Gospels, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse are all writings of the first or of the early years of the second century; (*b*) that whilst there is not the same agreement as to the authorship of these books, most writers believe that the second Gospel was written by St. Mark, that in the first and third Gospels there lie embedded fragments of a work by St. Matthew, and that the we-sections in the Acts were written by St. Luke; (*c*) that there is practical unanimity in maintaining the genuineness of the majority of the Epistles ascribed to St. Paul; (*d*) that writers are not agreed with regard to the date and authorship of the "Catholic" Epistles. What bearing have these facts upon the value of the New Testament?

B.—JUSTIFICATION OF CRITICISM AS APPLIED TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

(a) *Criticism Necessary.*—In the first place, whatever may seem to be its bearing upon the value of the New Testament, the application of critical methods to the New Testament writings is justifiable because it is necessary; it is necessary because we want to know what the writers

[1] Weizsäcker, Holtzmann, Harnack, Jülicher, McGiffert.
[2] *The Epistle of St. James.* Lond. 1892.
[3] *Einleitung.* Leipsig, 1897–9.

of its separate books wrote down, and who they were. To the first question our printed editions of the New Testament give us no final answer, and we are compelled to enter through the gate of examination of manuscripts upon the uneven path of textual criticism. To the second question tradition furnishes us with an answer, but no tradition is of any value until and unless it has stood the test of an historical examination of its claim to be accurate and reliable. Thus we are led, whether we like it or not, into the territory of the higher criticism, *i.e.* investigation into the value of the traditional account of the date and authorship of the various books of the New Testament. There is no possible way of escape, unless we are willing to accept without question the judgment of the past; nothing for it but to begin to collect data, and to test this judgment at the bar of history. As soon as we do that, tradition is found to be of varying value. The extent of that uncertainty it is our duty to determine.

(b) *Criticism Primitive.*—And in this connection again it must always be remembered that biblical criticism is not a new thing within the Christian Church, but an old thing. It flourished in the second and third centuries, it lay dormant during the period of the Roman supremacy, it awoke to new life at the Reformation, it has found ever-increasing scope for its activity during the past century. Those who are acquainted with the history of the Canon of Scripture are well aware that some of the books of the New Testament were received into the Canon only after much doubt and hesitation, and that certain other books were only excluded after much debate and uncertainty.[1] In other words, there have always been doubts with regard to the authorship of some of the Canonical books; and nineteenth-century critics, in giving expression to those doubts, are not doing a new, but an old thing. But the

[1] SANDAY, *Inspiration*, Lecture I.

area of debate has been enlarged. The modern critical writer finds himself equipped with resources which earlier writers lacked. He is possessed of a fulness of knowledge which was not within their reach, and he is therefore in a position to see difficulties in the traditional accounts of Church writings where they found nothing to awaken suspicion.

(c) *Criticism Apologetic.*—And, thirdly, it is commonly supposed that historical criticism is destructive in its tendencies, destructive of the historical character of the New Testament writings, destructive of the good faith of their authors, destructive of the Christian faith in the New Testament as the vehicle of a divine revelation. The exact reverse is the truth. Criticism of the New Testament is and must be apologetic and defensive. The reason of this may be found in some such considerations as the following.

During the nineteenth century the science of literary criticism made very rapid progress. At the present day every literary product of a past age is subjected to a minute and searching examination before it can be assigned to its proper place in history, and before the contribution which it makes to history and to the development of life and thought can be properly appreciated. Now it was impossible to withhold the New Testament literature from the scrutiny of that criticism which embraces every other known form of literature. The question which presented itself to scholars at the beginning of the nineteenth century was this. How will the New Testament stand the test of historical inquiry carried out on principles in accordance with modern historical science? Had it been possible to withhold the New Testament from such inquiry, an incalculably mischievous blow would have been dealt to the human conscience and to the authority of the Bible. The result of the inquiry so far as it has pro-

ceeded, has been to show that as witnesses for the life of Christ and the life and thought of the early Church, the New Testament writings need fear no criticism. Criticism has reasserted their value, and has shown that when subjected to the severest tests of modern science they are found to be historical documents of first-rate importance. It has made it possible for Christian men to continue to believe in the historical value of the New Testament with an unsullied conscience. But how could they have continued to assert their faith in the value of these writings as historical records, if they had been the victims of an uneasy surmise that an examination of the historical character of the Gospels on scientific methods would expose their fictitious character and destroy their credibility? From this point of view criticism comes to the succour of conscience, and is the bulwark of faith.

It may, however, be said that criticism throws doubt upon the authorship of some of the books, and therefore upon their value. Now, in the first place, the value of the Bible depends very little upon questions of authorship, and the value of the contents of its books should be sharply distinguished from the value of the traditional statements about the men who wrote them. Probably the first thing that a Christian wishes to be assured of with regard to his New Testament is that it gives him a faithful record of the life of Christ. In other words, he wishes to have some certainty of its high value as an historical record. In this respect criticism has rendered inestimable service. In proving that there can be little doubt of the authenticity of most of St. Paul's letters, and in fixing the first decade of the second century as the period before which the four Gospels must all have been written, it has set at rest for ever doubts as to the chief features of the life and teaching of the Founder of Christianity. The question of date is very important,

because historical records are generally speaking of greater or less value in proportion to their relative nearness to the events which they describe. This is certainly the case with the Synoptic Gospels. If it could have been proved that these writings originated from the end of the second century, their value as historical documents would certainly be less than it is. But when we have shown them to be genuine works of the first century, representing with great fidelity the belief of the Christian Church within a half-century of Christ's death, the question of authorship becomes of very little practical importance. What we want to be assured of is the historical value of the contents of these books. It is of secondary importance to know, *e.g.*, whether John Mark wrote the second Gospel, or some other Church writer whose name remains unknown to us.

Thus the services of criticism in the defence of the historical background of the Christian faith can hardly be estimated too highly. In the Synoptic Gospels the Christian has historical sources for the life of Christ which have been tested in the crucible of scientific criticism, and have been proved to be documents of the first century, and of a very high order of historical accuracy. So that it is no longer possible for writers, who wish to maintain a reputation for sober judgment, to represent these books as quite worthless forgeries of late date. Again, in the undoubted Epistles of St. Paul, the Christian has evidence of the growth and belief of the early Church which it is no longer possible to set aside or to reject. This is all that the ordinary Christian desires, or can have. What he wants is some degree of certainty that the writings of the New Testament are in the main trustworthy; that they are acknowledged to be so by a majority of students of history; that in trusting them he is not placing faith in writings which scientific historians have shown to be

worthless, but is dealing with works of admittedly very great historical importance. All this criticism gives him, and he can ask no more. Outside the limits of this general agreement lies the land of debate and question. The historian regards all literary documents with a searching scrutiny for which the ordinary man has neither time nor inclination. The work of the historian more and more ceases to be a sharp dividing between true and false, right and wrong. It becomes a delicate handling of probabilities, a weighing of possible conclusions against others more probable.

So it is with the books of the New Testament. For the professed historian general agreement as to date and historical value is only the prelude to a searching inquiry into the more subtle and finer questions which every book will suggest to him. For the ordinary Christian these have no meaning. Secure in the belief that he is dealing with books which are in the main what they profess to be, he reads them just as he reads any ancient documents, with a healthy disregard of the minuter details of criticism, which he regards as necessary subjects of inquiry for experts, but as of little practical value for himself.

The question of authorship assumes, however, rather a different aspect when we pass from the professedly historical to the other writings of the New Testament. In some respects nothing is lost by the admission that we are ignorant of the authorship of some of these writings. The case of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a crucial one. Few will now defend the Pauline authorship; yet the letter can in no sense be said to lose in value because the writer's name is unknown. For nearly nineteen centuries the Epistle has borne its witness to divine truths, and brought instruction and consolation to human hearts. It does not cease to do so when we find that not St. Paul but some other wrote it. Some indeed will hold this

to be a gain. St. Paul is known to us from other writings. In the author of this Epistle we add one to the number of our spiritual acquaintances, and can stretch out our hands across the centuries to thank one more great teacher who, having found the Pearl of Great Price, has written the history of his discovery in words that have been a perpetual joy to every successive generation of seekers after God. Let any who cling to traditions of authorship ask themselves whether they really can believe that this Epistle loses in value because it has been shown that St. Paul did not write it. Still, in the case of this Epistle as in that of the first Gospel the assertion of authorship does not form part of the writings themselves, but of the Church tradition with reference to them. There are many who will feel that they have no objection to giving up the traditional authorship of these books, but that in the case of, *e.g.*, 2 St. Peter a definite claim is made to authorship which is a perversion of truth if the letter were not written by the Apostle. This objection has a good deal of force which it is useless to deny. We should all probably regard genuine letters of an Apostle as possessing a higher interest than letters by an unknown Church writer of the second century. But it would be going very much too far to say that if this Epistle and the other Catholic Epistles, or some of them, be eventually acknowledged as second-century works they lose their value. They may lose a certain flavour of personal interest; they cease to throw light upon the character and life of their reputed authors. They become evidence of the literary habits and Church life and thought of the period in which they were written. But if they ever had any dogmatic value, they cannot lose it. If the thoughts contained in them are profound, they cannot cease to be so. If, in short, these letters ever contained any teaching about God which is of importance or any practical exhortation to Christian men

which is useful, the change in our belief as to their authorship can neither deprive that teaching of its importance, nor that exhortation of its permanent utility.

C.—VALUE

In the preceding pages the results already reached in New Testament criticism have been stated, and its application justified.

Some attempt must now be made to estimate the permanent value of the New Testament in the light of what has been said. (a) *Historical.*—In the first place it is of value for the historian. Without it the story of the Life of the Redeemer would be practically unknown, and the early history of the Christian movement involved in obscurity. For the life of Christ we have, in the first place, such evidence as can be gathered from the letters of a great teacher like St. Paul, writing within a period of thirty years from the death of Christ. Secondly, we have the Gospels. The evidence which these afford has to be sifted like the evidence of any literary historical sources. But when so sifted they prove themselves to be witnesses of a very high order in respect of the sources upon which they are based, and of nearness in point of time to the events described.

For the history of life and thought in the early Church we have the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of St. Paul, and, whatever be the facts as to their authorship and date, the Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse.

(b) *Dogmatic.*—And secondly, if the New Testament has an essential value as a collection of historical records, it has further an acquired value in view of its history within the Church. It has always been, and is to-day, the standard of belief and the test of false doctrine. Partial and one-sided estimates of the character and Person of Christ, doctrines of God which contain a germ

of truth distorted so as to become unreal and untrue, theories of Church order and ordinance which develop one fundamental truth at the expense of others, all these have in the past suffered the inevitable fate which sooner or later overtakes human perversions of truth, as men have re-read the New Testament and come to the conclusion that it is better to hold to the many aspects of truth there revealed than to magnify one out of its due proportion and remain blind to the others. The God of Marcion, the Christ of Arius, the God of Calvin, the Christ of Socinus, the doctrinally infallible pope of the Roman, the verbally infallible Bible of the Protestant Churches, these are a few examples of which the Ecclesiastical historians could furnish many others.

(c) *Religious.*—But, thirdly, to most Christian people the main value of the New Testament writings lies not in the fact that they are faithful witnesses to the making of the Christian Church and the source of the Christian Creed, but in a quality which belongs to them and to the writings of the Old Testament in a degree to which no other records can lay claim. As we read them we find that they claim to be an authoritative expression of the Divine Character and the Divine Will, and this claim when tested at the bar of the human conscience is found to be justifiable, and is approved. They exhibit as in a mirror the traits of the Divine Personality after whom the heart of man is ever searching, and the Christian finding here a Revelation of God realises that he has that eternal life which consists in knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Again they portray the fundamental needs and wants of the human character, and the Christian as he reads feels that what is written there was written of himself. It is in this direct appeal of the New Testament to the human conscience that its inspiration lies. That the religious value of the New

Testament is bound up with the ideas of Revelation and Inspiration is plain. The difficulty is to give to these terms clear definition. Indeed definition must for the present content itself with negative rather than with positive methods. On the one hand, a conception of Inspiration such as that commonly understood by the phrase, *verbal Inspiration*, which can only maintain its ground by denying the legitimacy of the application of critical methods to the Sacred Books, is thereby self-condemned, and must be set aside as arbitrary. On the other hand, critical writers who suppose that a result of their work has been the elimination of the element of inspiration, fail to appreciate the limitations of criticism. Inspiration is a quality which cannot possibly be diminished by increase of true knowledge. Of course if critical inquiry had resulted in the discovery that the books of the New Testament were third-century compilations, and that they were entirely works of the imagination without historical foundation, their claim to be works of historical value, and to be inspired as being the historical records of a revelation made at a particular period, would at once be seen to be groundless. But in the light of what has been said on page 231, the claim of the New Testament to contain the record of a Divine revelation still makes itself heard when criticism has done its work, and that with all the more cogency and impressiveness, since criticism has anticipated and set aside a thousand possible objections. The truth is that the question of the inspiration of the Bible, *i.e.* whether or no it contain a revelation of God, is really independent of criticism. It is a part of the larger question, Is there a God who can reveal Himself? and is cognate to the similar questions, Is there a Revelation in Nature? Is there a Revelation in History? Is there a Revelation in Christ? Now the existence of God is to some men a fact which needs no special proof

because everything of which they are conscious illustrates it. To others it is a conception, unreal so far as they themselves are concerned, which may or may not be true, but which is incapable of proof. Is there a Revelation in Nature? To some men the whole earth is full of the glory of the Lord—"earth crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God." Others find there no traces of His presence. Is there a Revelation in Christ? For some men this question receives daily affirmation in their experience. To others it is a merely speculative inquiry to which no certain answer can be given. Is there a Revelation in History? To some men the development of human life and thought is inexplicable without the presupposition of the Divine Mind directing, guiding, controlling it. To others such an assumption is wholly superfluous and misleading. Certainly the existence of God cannot be proved—cannot, that is to say, be expressed in terms which will coerce the intellect and compel the belief of those who do not already find God to be a necessary factor in life's experience. So-called proofs of His existence are not really proofs, even to those who believe in Him. The facts stated as being of the nature of proofs are the expression of belief, not the cause of it. They presuppose belief, and do not create it. We believe, because God's existence is as much a part of our consciousness as our own existence. I exist—God exists in and outside me. I am conscious of my own existence; I am conscious of a fuller existence, of which mine is a part. I call; He answers. But this factor of experience, this element in consciousness can never be so stated as to convince others, because any formal statement of it is a statement of a part of it only, which standing by itself is unreal and lifeless. Of what use to argue that Nature bears the impress of a reasoning Mind, to men who see no such impress there? As a matter

of fact, we ourselves do not rise from a contemplation of Nature to a belief in God. Rather it is because we find God to be a part of our consciousness that we are able to recognise Him in the natural world. The consciousness of God illumines every side of our environment.

Moreover, consciousness of God's being implies the co-operation of every part of a man's being. It is I who am conscious of God, not merely my intellect, but my moral nature and my volitional nature. Consequently any expression or formal statement of God's existence which appeals only to the intellect, must be partial and one-sided and unreal. Hence there can be no *proof* of God's existence, and it follows that it is impossible to prove that the Bible is a history of God's revelation of Himself to mankind.

But, nevertheless, those who find God in consciousness will, for the most part, be ready to recognise that much that is said of Him in the Bible corresponds to His true nature and Being. It is unnecessary to repeat here what has already been said in another essay in this volume with regard to the Old Testament. The essential presupposition of Revelation is the existence of God. Do we find God to be in some sense a part of the most elementary phenomena of consciousness? Then much that is said about Him in the Old Testament will approve itself to us as a true expression of His nature, and the proper way of stating the process which led to this expression will be, not that it is a development of thought due to natural causes, but that the Old Testament writers give expression to their consciousness of God, who revealed himself to them in increasing degree as history progressed. And since we find this developing consciousness of the Divine life in the Jewish people to an extent in which we find it nowhere else in the pre-Christian

world, we may rightly say that the literature, which is the record of its growth, is inspired in a higher degree than any other pre-Christian literature. But when we pass to the New Testament the question becomes more complicated and intricate. Here we have to deal with a new factor. It is no longer a question only of God in history, but of God-in-*Christ* in history. The question of Revelation in the New Testament, and consequently of its inspiration, depends almost entirely upon the attitude adopted towards the doctrine of the Incarnation. And with regard to this it must be said clearly that consciousness of the Divine life of God and perception of the Divine element in Christ are two very different things. There is this fundamental difference between them. Knowledge of God is for many men not an inference from the facts of consciousness, but a part of those facts. But knowledge of God-in-Christ is such an inference. "We saw and (then) believed." Now there are many who find themselves conscious of the Divine life of God, and who therefore trace Him in Nature and in history, who do not find themselves able to give that explanation of the life of Christ which is given in the Christian Creeds. These will very probably assent to the definition of the Revelation and Inspiration of the Old Testament just stated. But how will they regard the New Testament? They will probably be inclined to draw a distinction between the Gospels as containing the teaching of Christ and the remaining books. Revelation, they will urge, implies fresh development, new growth. Writers who express for the first time a new aspect of the Divine life may rightly be called inspired. Hence Revelation carries with it the idea of advance, and Inspiration implies originality. Consequently it might be urged that the Gospels stand on the same footing as the Old Testament, representing the final stage of that grow-

ing consciousness of God's moral nature and attributes to which the Old Testament writers give expression. Just in as far as Christ gave utterance to aspects of God's being and will which had not previously been expressed, just so far God was revealing Himself through Christ, and the records which enshrine His teaching may be called records of Revelation, and so inspired writings. But in the case of the remaining books there will seem, to those who are here represented, this difference. St. Paul and the rest, it will be urged, in so far as they give utterance to fundamental truths of the human consciousness, re-affirm what was said before them, lack originality, fail in creativeness. They are engaged in applying truths already revealed, and it is just in their method of application that they will seem, to the class of theistic observers who are here represented, to lay themselves open to criticism and question. But this paper is mainly intended for that other class of people who, starting from their consciousness of God in life, find themselves able to yield assent to the doctrine of God-in-Christ as contained in the Christian Creeds. This conception seems to them to so illumine and explain the whole of their experience as to assume an aspect of irresistible truth. It explains the personality of the historical Christ of the Gospels, it is so fitting a completion of the gradual revelation of God in the history of the pre-Christian world, it so verifies itself when tested in the experience of their own life, that it soon ceases to be an inference drawn from contemplation of historical facts, and becomes a guiding principle of life, and the most simple way of expressing consciousness of the divine. How will such as these define the Inspiration of the New Testament?

And with the Gospels the answer is comparatively easy. They are the records of the words and works of Christ, and these are the vehicles of revelation about the nature of God

and His will in a degree to which no others can approximate, inasmuch as their author was one who was not, like the prophets of old, expressing truth about God of which He had become conscious, but was Himself the manifestation in Human nature of the Divine life. Everything, therefore, that He spoke comes to us as an authoritative utterance which, when rightly understood and interpreted, claims the immediate obedience of men.

The inspiration of the remaining books is less easy to define. Their claim to inspiration is based upon the assumption that in the main, they express the Will of God in Christ. The religious value, *e.g.*, of St. Paul's letters depends upon the supposition that the great Apostle has rightly understood and applied the teaching of Christ Himself. In so far as he has done that his letters may be regarded as containing the revelation of the will of God in Christ, and as inspired by Him in a degree to which no post-apostolic writings have ever laid plausible claims. In the same way the Acts of the Apostles may be regarded as a record of the revelation of God in Christ to the primitive Church, and will stand on the same level of inspiration as the historical books of the Old Testament. The Catholic Epistles, if they be ultimately approved as apostolic, will stand on the same level as St. Paul's Epistles. If they be shown to be second-century writings they must be regarded as inspired just in so far as they contain the expression of truth about the nature and will of God which is in harmony with the teaching of Christ. With regard to the Apocalypse it must be confessed that it is difficult to estimate or define its inspiration. It has been said that "the central feature of the Apocalypse" is "its intense longing for the Advent of Christ and His Kingdom, with its confident assertion of the ultimate victory of good over evil and of the dawning of a state of blissful perfection where sorrow and sighing

shall flee away."[1] In this confident assertion some will find an element of revelation.

In what has hitherto been said the quality of inspiration has been sought only in the contents of the books of the New Testament. But Christian people will probably always see in their history in the Church a proof that in a special sense God has been pleased to make use of them as the medium of His revelation to mankind.

In conclusion, the claim of the Bible, the Old Testament as well as the New, may be said to lie in its revelation of the Divine nature and the Divine will. Just in so far as this is recognised will its authority be regarded as paramount. It appeals directly to the human heart and conscience. The God who revealed Himself to the Jewish people as Righteous and Compassionate is the God of whom the human heart is ever conscious. Men find that what is said in the Bible of the nature of God and His purposes and His will awakens in their own moral being a responsive echo. Just as all who are conscious of God's being, recognise His revelation in Nature, and worship Him as there revealed in beauty and in power, so they recognise His revelation in the history of the Jewish people and in the person of Christ, and worship Him as revealed in righteousness and in redeeming love. To such as these the records of this revelation will always be invested with a sacredness of association which makes them unique and unparalleled in literature.

[1] SANDAY, *Inspiration*, p. 378.

VI.

THE CHURCH

By A. J. CARLYLE

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WHEN we consider the subject of the Church of Christ, when we desire to ask what is its character, what is its place in the religious life, what is its authority, we are at once confronted with an ambiguity.

The phrase "The Church" may obviously be used in two senses: it may be used of the society of men throughout the world who have been admitted into, and continue members of, the visible Society of Christian men, or it may be used in the sense of the whole body of those throughout the world who are in living communion with Christ, a body of men known only to God, not easily to be described under the terms of a visible society.

It is not necessary here to discuss the relation borne to each other by the two senses in which the word may be used, for in this essay it is the visible Church which is to be considered. The visible Church is the society of Christian men, of all those who have been admitted into, and continue within the society. What is the function or object of this Christian society, what is its character, what is its authority?

What is the function or object of the society? Why should the disciples of Christ form a society at all? It is admitted that the relation between God and man is very really the relation between God and the individual man. Is this relation not independent of all external conditions and circumstances, a relation which no man can produce for another man, and which no man can, properly speaking, hinder in another? If the relation is of this kind, what need is there for a society at all?

Such questions are natural, but they ignore the character and principles of human life. To look upon the individual as leading a self-dependent or self-centred life is to mistake the character and conditions of human life. Man is, as a matter of fact, dependent on his fellow-men in every part of life. From man he receives life, by the co-operation of his fellow-men he is maintained in life. He lives upon the efforts, the labours of his fellow-men, not only of his own time, but of all times. This, which is obvious enough with regard to man's life on its

hypsical side, is true also on the moral and spiritual side. It is through our relation to our fellow-men that we learn the true meaning of life, it is from them that we derive our moral and spiritual conceptions. No doubt there is individuality in the moral and spiritual life, as indeed there is also in the physical, but it is normally conditioned and even determined by the moral and spiritual ideas of our fellow-men. It is no more in accordance with the normal operations of the Spirit of God that a man should learn and lay hold of the truth without the intervention of his fellows, than it is in accordance with the normal operation of God that the physical life should be thus independent. No doubt there is a direct and immediate communion of the soul with God, but man normally comes to this, and is maintained in it, by the work, by the co-operation of his fellow-men.

Society is therefore as much a necessity normally of the spiritual life as it is of the physical. We have long ago given up the notion that progress is to be gained by striving to return to a condition in which man, as was once supposed, was independent of his fellow-men. We have learned that this conception is as contrary to the true idea of progress, as this notion of primitive life is inconsistent with the actual history of mankind. We must acknowledge that in the field of religion the error would be quite as great. Progress is not to be won by the mere destruction of society, but only by the continual readjustment of the forms and methods of society to the actual conditions and character of life. Destruction of false social conditions, of conventional and unnecessary forms, may often be necessary, but we destroy only to reconstruct. It is true, indeed, that man can lift up his heart to God without the intervention of his fellow-men, but it is through his fellow-men that he has learned to know God, to turn to Him, to love Him. We cannot in

the religious life, any more than in other departments of life, do without the inspiration, the instruction which we receive from all generations of our fellow-men. We are to each other ministers of grace, not only of that which may be more specially called sacramental, but of all kinds.

But this is not all. It is no doubt true that the religious life is centred upon our relation to God, from whom all things come, through whom all things live; no doubt the religious life is centred upon the relation between God and man's soul. But that is not the whole of the religious life. We are not only the children of the Eternal Father, but we are the brothers of all His children. Not in the Fatherhood of God alone does the religious conception of life find its source and meaning, but in the Brotherhood of man. It is true that the first commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," but, "The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Upon these two—not upon one only—do all the law and the prophets hang.

If it is necessarily true that the life which is communion with, relation to, the Father of mankind, requires the continual co-operation, the mutual assistance of men, it must be obvious that the life of relation to our fellow-men is itself the life of co-operation, of mutual assistance, of mutual love. This life is the life of society, of association, of the Christian Church. It is the function of the Christian Church to promote the true spirit, the true character of the common life of mankind. It is its function to train men to look at each other justly, in the right spirit, with the right heart. The Church is no doubt in one sense a society selected from mankind, but it is selected in order that men may be trained within the association for the brotherly life, inside and outside of the association. It has been by one of the most unhappy perversions of the true Christian conception that the society

of Christian men has sometimes been looked upon as though it were the sole field for the carrying out of the Christian life of brotherhood, and not simply the training school for the life of brotherhood among all mankind. It is surely impossible so to misread the teaching of our Lord in the Gospels, under the influence of a strained interpretation of the conflict between the Church and the world. But indeed the Christian heart has continually striven to correct the sometimes perverted Christian head in this great matter.

The function, then, of the Christian society is to nourish the religious life, the life of communion with God our Father, the life of communion with our brother.

Such, then, are the functions, such is the necessity for the Christian society: what is its organisation, what is its machinery? Again, it has been sometimes thought that organisation and machinery are only harmful to society, especially to the society of the Church. There are anarchists in religion as well as in ordinary life. And anarchism, whether it is the protest against the exaggeration of the mechanical in life, or the revolt against the false in the organisation of life, has its own relative truth and value. But when the anarchist maintains that society in the general can act without organisation, we can only answer that he misreads the history of the human race. The answer to anarchism is written on the whole face of history. The advance of civilisation has in large measure been worked out through the development of the machinery of social life; the inspiring ideas of the great leaders of mankind would have been lost, had it not been for the fact that they have embodied themselves in institutions. Nature is not unorganised, vague, fluctuating, but is articulate, ordered and persistent in order.

One great general principle at least the somewhat sterile abstractions of Political Economy have brought

home to the human intelligence, the principle that all human progress is won by the division of labour, that it is only through the discharge of particular functions by each member of society that society advances. What is this but the principle of organisation in society? It is not otherwise in the Church. Here, too, prevails the same general principle as that which dominates society in the general. In the religious society, just as much as in the "secular," if we allow ourselves for the moment to use a misleading phrase, progress can only be achieved and maintained when each member finds and discharges his own true function. It is upon this principle that the organisation of the Christian society is based. Nothing is more clearly brought out by St. Paul, whom we may well call the statesman of the early Church, than this great conception.[1] There is one body, of which we are all members, but in the one body there are diversities of gifts, diversities of service, diversities of workings. It is God who works "all and in all," but not in the same fashion. Each member of the body has its own function, its own appropriate work; not all have the same functions—are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers? Each member has its own function, every Christian has his own gifts or gift, for the well-being of the whole body, and in discharging this function, in exercising these gifts, he finds his true place in the body.

St. Paul at least saw clearly that it was not in anarchy, it was not in the want of order that the true hope of society lay, but rather in the full organisation of life. It is this conviction no doubt which gave him so clear and profound an insight into the principle of government and discipline in human society—a principle probably little understood by some of the primitive Christian societies—it is this which led him to recognise so clearly that the government

[1] Compare especially 1 Corinthians xii.

and rule even of the "secular" society is from God, that there is no authority but from God. The organisation and authority of even "secular" society is divine, not carnal or profane. It was a just apprehension of this truth and of St. Paul's teaching on the point, which led Irenæus in one notable passage[1] to urge on the Christians of his time that Satan was only lying, as was his custom, when he claimed that the kingdoms of the world belonged to him, "for it is not he who hath appointed the kingdoms of the world, but God." The principle that society needs organisation is clearly as important in the Church as it is in all human society.

The visible Church of Christ is, then, a society of faithful men, organised and ordered, with the divine institutions of government and discipline. For these are, of a certainty, divine institutions, necessary in all human relations, and not least necessary in the religious associations of man. The necessity of the organisation lies in the characteristics of society and is witnessed to by the history of religion.

In the New Testament and in the history of the Church we can see the gradual development of these institutions: we can see the organisation of the Christian society beginning from the simplest, the most rudimentary forms, developing gradually into the complex systems of mediæval and modern Church life. For the history of the institutions of the Christian society seems in the main to correspond with the history of the institutions of other societies; it is the history of the continual adaptation of the forms of authority to the actual requirements of society.

During the life of our Lord Himself we can scarcely say that the Church has more than the germs of organisation; there are to be found traces that from the earliest times

[1] *Adv. Hær.*, v. 24.

the Christian society, so far as it was differentiated from the surrounding Jewish society, exercised, or, perhaps rather, could exercise a certain disciplinary authority over its members. The power of binding and loosing, of forgiving and of retaining of sins, whatever may be the exact significance of these forms of authority, belongs to the community. Certain persons had been chosen by our Lord to be His constant companions, to be the witnesses of His life and teaching, and had been occasionally sent out to proclaim the advent of His Kingdom. In the latter function, at least, they are said to have been assisted by a larger number, the Seventy.

Beyond this it does not seem possible to speak of organisation. With the removal of our Lord from the sight of His disciples, with His ascension, the Society evidently began to develop rapidly. At first, indeed, it would seem that beyond the teaching function of the Twelve, and the great, though undefined, leadership and influence which would spring from that source, no other differentiation of function took place. But within a few years this began to change. It was found that another organisation was required besides that whose purpose it was to proclaim the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. In the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we have a clear and forcible narrative of the circumstances which made it necessary to appoint certain officials to take charge of the charitable and financial affairs of the community. And a little later on we discover that there are to be found in the Christian community officers whose exact function may indeed at first be somewhat uncertain, but who at least seem to take a prominent part in the conduct of the affairs of the different societies. The Presbyters or Bishops of the Acts and Epistles are officers whose duties are partly charitable, partly administrative, and partly didactic, though it may perhaps be doubtful

whether in the New Testament this last function belongs to them in any exclusive sense.

It must be carefully observed that alongside of this official class or classes (for the relation of the officers of Acts vi. to the Presbyters can hardly be ascertained) there grew up an organisation of function, which was at first the more important in the primitive Church.

After the appointment of the officials of Acts vi., as we may understand, the Twelve restricted themselves in the main to their function as preachers of the gospel, and to a general oversight of the affairs of the community. They had been specially chosen by our Lord to be witnesses of His life, of His teaching, of His death and resurrection, and their special function was to tell men what they had seen and heard. It would not appear that they claimed any absolute or exclusive authority in the discipline and government of the society. But as teachers their authority was accepted as that of men specially inspired and directed by God. But in this, though their place was the first, they were not alone. Alongside of them there appears from a very early date a class of prophets, whose position may be somewhat difficult to define, but of whom it may at least be asserted that in the judgment of the Church they spoke at times under the inspiration of God. But even this is not all. It is impossible to study the treatment of the "gifts" in St. Paul's letters, and especially in the first letter to the Corinthians, without recognising that the functions of all the various members of the early Church were determined in the main by the possession, for various objects, and no doubt in various degrees, of the gifts of God's Spirit bestowed upon each individual by God Himself. St. Paul's phrases seem to indicate that for every function there was an appropriate gift, and that it was the possession of the gift which marked out him who held it for work or office of any kind

and not the other way. It is to misunderstand the nature of the organisation of the primitive Church to overlook this fact, and to treat its offices as though they were primarily delegations from a superior authority.

Gradually, however, these various functions are divided into two classes: one which is exercised solely in virtue of the possession of some spiritual gift, without the intervention of the authority of the community, the other, in which the divine gift qualified for and is the necessary precedent to the office, yet which normally required the authority of the community, or its representative, for its discharge.

As typical of these two classes we may take on the one side the Apostolic and Prophetic office, on the other the Episcopate and Diaconate, as they are presented to us in the Didaché. The Apostles and Prophets may be tested by the community, and those who are found to claim their place falsely may be rejected, but the community has no power to confer the office. The Episcopate and Diaconate are received by the appointment of the community itself, but no doubt still after the preparatory trial or *δοκιμασία*, which should show whether the person examined has the necessary spiritual gift.[1]

Such is, so far as we can judge, the early history of the organisation of the Christian society. At first indistinct, it gradually assumed a clearly defined character, but the process was gradual and very possibly proceeded with different degrees of rapidity and on somewhat different lines in the various Churches. Assuming that all the epistles which bear St. Paul's name are written by him, we may be inclined to think that there is not only progress visible in the chronological series of these, but also that the conditions in the various Churches to

[1] Cf. *Didaché*, xi. and xv.

which he writes are not precisely the same. However this may be, there can be little doubt that a few years later the Christian societies in different places possessed an organisation, not always equally fully developed or on precisely the same model.

As the organisation of the Churches developed, the functions of the Bishops or Presbyters seem gradually to become more clear and distinct, and the importance of the prophetic office gradually diminishes. And soon there appears within the College of Presbyters or Bishops a new distinction of rank or office. At first it does not appear that any one of these occupied any special pre-eminence, but in the beginning of the second century we find from the Ignatian letters that, at least in certain Oriental Churches, one of these officials emerges from the rest, as the centre of the organised system of the community. The phenomena, presented to us by the letter of St. Clement and the significant silence of the Ignatian letter to Rome and of St. Polycarp's letter to Philippi, together with the indications of the *Shepherd* of Hermas, would lead us to suppose that this development took place first in the Oriental Churches, and only gradually extended to the West. In time, however, the new system of organisation spread over the whole of the Churches and became the normal type of Church government.

In the second century also there begins to appear a system of organisation by which the Christian Churches were formally united to each other. From the first they had been most closely associated; if there was no distinct organisation of unity, there was no lack of the sense of unity. During the lifetime of the Apostles indeed, these had probably served as the main connecting links between the Christian communities, and in the generation which followed them their places had been possibly, to some extent, taken by the wandering apostles and

prophets of the Didaché. As these in their turn passed away, the need for a more formal organisation of unity began to make itself felt. And accordingly, in the latter part of the second century, we begin to find the Bishops of groups of Churches in various places uniting together for counsel, for deliberation upon common interests and common action. The phenomena of Montanism appear to have furnished an early occasion for such action, and, about the same time or a little later, the disputes between the Roman Church and the Churches of Asia Minor as to the date of keeping Easter show us the Churches of Asia deliberating and acting together. This synodical system developes during the third century and may be said to culminate in the Council of Nice, in which at last in some sense the whole Church was represented.

But again, just as the College of Presbyters or Bishops in the individual Churches had found a head in one person, so this synodical movement in the Churches soon developed a metropolitical and a patriarchal system. In the end of the third century we find that in most districts the bishop of some one diocese came to be regarded as having a pre-eminence over the others. The canons of the Council of Nice show the development of this system into the great Patriarchates. The great Patriarchate of Rome gradually claimed pre-eminence over all others, at any rate in the West, and the monarchical system of Church organisation was completed in the West when the Bishop of Rome claimed to have, and was recognised as having, supremacy over all Churches. The Oriental Church held aloof, wavering sometimes, but never fully accepting the claim of the Roman Patriarch. Gradually the Western and Eastern Churches drew apart, the monarchical principle growing steadily in the West, while the Eastern Church continued to have the character of a confederation of churches.

The services rendered by this great organisation of Western Christendom to the education of Western Europe were immense, both in religion and civilisation. It may indeed be doubted whether any other system could have carried religion and the humane arts through the period of confusion and anarchy out of which the European societies gradually emerged. It was the Western Church which not only kept alive religion, but which also handed on the torch of civilisation and culture, almost, but never wholly, quenched, to the new world. It was the Western Church which gradually tamed the barbarism of the Teutonic races. It was the Western Church which taught the European world that there are principles of society greater than the principle of force. From Hildebrand to Boniface VIII. the Church was, if not actually the supreme power of Europe, yet at least the greatest single force in Western Europe. But the fall of the Holy Roman Empire, virtually destroyed by the Papacy, was soon avenged in the fall of the mediæval Papacy itself. To outward appearance Boniface VIII. was a figure so imposing, so lofty, so commanding, that it might have been thought that the Roman See was at the very height of its power. But he found himself confronted with new principles, new forces in European society, and against the new national sense of France his power failed him. With the fall of Boniface VIII. the Papacy fell from its supreme position in European society; and in the end of the fourteenth century it was confronted by a rising of the organised Church against itself. The Conciliar movement shook the Papacy almost to its fall, but the Papacy survived a movement which was weak, because there lay behind it no living impulse of religion, but only a dissatisfaction with the machinery of religion.

It was different with the great revolt of the sixteenth century. Against this the Papacy did indeed defend itself, and that by the only weapons which could possibly

be successful, by seriously taking up the task of reform; and, so reforming itself, it won back much that it had lost. But its reform came too late to avert the disruption of Western Christendom. With a light and careless heart the Papacy met the first movements of the Reformation, and before it had apprehended the nature of the questions at issue, Northern Europe had broken off from it and remained separate. But before we consider the character of the Reformation in its bearing upon the theory of the Church, we must retrace our steps and consider another question with regard to its history, namely, the development of the theory of the teaching authority in the Church and the nature of this theory.

What is the authority of the Church in doctrine? What does it mean? How has the conception grown and developed?

We must be careful to observe that in the society of the Church there is an element or characteristic of authority which is not, at least in the same manner and degree, present in other societies; the Church exercises not only the authority of discipline, but the authority of a teacher. It is not necessary to discuss further the authority of the Church in the first sense; in considering the development of the organisation of the Church we have already considered the mode of its operation. But with regard to its authority as a teacher the matter is different: the history and character of this function of the Church must be examined and traced.

The first and the supreme authority in the Church of Christ is the authority of Christ Himself. While He was in the world in the flesh, there was always one final authority to whom His disciples could and did continually appeal. But with the Ascension of our Lord the Church passed into a somewhat different stage. There were now

two sources of authoritative teaching: the one, the tradition of our Lord's own doctrine and sayings; the other, the present inspiration of the Holy Spirit working in Christian men. These two are the sources of truth as present to the consciousness of the primitive Church, the first having from the earliest days the authority of command, the second an authority of interpretation and application.

The teaching of the Holy Spirit in the primitive Church found its method in the prophetic office, if we may include in this the apostolic, though perhaps the apostolic authority was primarily that of the veracious witnesses and hearers of our Lord. In the prophetic office the Holy Spirit did in the judgment of the Church continually speak to Christian men. But this office gradually passes away. It is only necessary to compare the literature of the New Testament with the literature of the sub-apostolic ages to perceive that the authoritative character of the prophetic tone gradually but surely gives way to the argumentative tone of the ordinary teacher. The prophetic office, in its first sense, passed away, gradually, indeed, but finally, and left no ordinary successor; though there is, no doubt, a secondary prophetic office, a prophetic authority in men speaking under the power of the Spirit of God, which has not passed nor can pass, which still speaks in many fashions.

The Church was left with the tradition of the teaching of our Lord and of the apostolic or prophetic men of the first generations which succeeded His ascension. By this time the tradition of our Lord's sayings and action had assumed a more or less definite form or forms, and as I think one can easily see by a study of the Apostolic Fathers, from the very first the record of our Lord's sayings, taken to be a veracious record, is of commanding authority in the Church.

But also, the Churches were by this time in possession of

a considerable body of writings of apostolic and prophetic men, and these also, as proceeding from men who spoke under the power of the Holy Spirit, were evidently looked upon with reverence, and from year to year more distinctly assumed a position of authority in the Churches. The fact that the Christian Church inherited from the Jewish the Scriptures of the Old Testament made easier the process by which an authoritative body of New Testament writings was gradually formed and recognised. At first, indeed, as was natural, when disputes arose, appeal was made to the traditions of the Churches, and especially to those which it was thought had possessed some special connection with one or more of the principal Apostles. As late as the end of the second century such an appeal is made by writers like Irenæus, confronted with the dangerous tendencies of Gnosticism. The recorded and preserved teaching of our Lord and His Apostles might not in all cases be sufficiently detailed or clear to meet some special difficulty, and in such cases especially, an appeal to the traditional beliefs of the apostolic Churches might be useful. I do not think there was in all this, at first, any notion that such traditions were in themselves authoritative; the decision with regard to this, just as with regard to the authority of any professedly apostolic or prophetic work, depended, I think, wholly upon the question whether such a tradition or such a work could establish its claims to apostolic or prophetic authority. The testimony of the Church was, for a long time, not a declaration on the authority of the Church, but a declaration that such and such a tradition or document had been received by the Church from an apostolic or prophetic source.

Very slowly and gradually there arose in the Church the notion that, while the succession of the strict prophetic office had, speaking generally, died out in individuals, some-

thing of a similar kind had survived in the Church as a whole. Very gradually this took definite form round the decisions of the great councils. Still more gradually did this harden into the notion of the infallible authority of an Œcumenical Council. And in the West, so far as the Synodical organisation of the Church was superseded by the Monarchical, this prophetic authority was taken, at least by many, to centre in the person of the Bishop of Rome, so that, though the mediæval Western Church never formally acknowledged the infallibility of his solemn decisions, a doctrine of that kind had some currency.

At the close of the Middle Ages, then, we may say that the Western Church presented itself to men's minds as a highly organised body, in which indeed the separate national or provincial Churches had some undefined liberties, but in which also the Church as a whole was supreme and authoritative, the administrative and judicial supremacy centred in the Pope, and the infallible teaching resided either in the Pope or in the universal councils of the Church or in both. Such was the full development of the disciplinary and teaching authority of the Church. Its judgments were absolute, its doctrine was infallible.

The theory had culminated just at the time when the moral order and discipline of mediæval society and of the mediæval Church were breaking down. The mediæval Church had often suffered from grave vices, but once and again there had appeared in it some new spiritual impulse which revived its failing life. In the thirteenth century, for instance, the great movement of the Dominicans and the Franciscans had shaken and stirred to its depths the whole of the Western world. But the revival of the Friars was scarcely more profound than it was shortlived, for in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the hold of religion and the Church upon Western Europe plainly

relaxed with great rapidity. The Lollard and Hussite movements were very complex in their character, but at least they indicate sufficiently clearly that the machinery of the Church had fallen out of harmony in some measure with the religious sense of the community, and that the Church itself no longer commanded that respect which it had received in the past.

If we may venture to sum up the characteristics of the Church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we should say that, speaking generally, the doctrine of the Church, once a living and growing reality, had become abstract and sterile, while its discipline was decayed. The Church was corrupt in head and members, incapable of interpreting aright its own more profound religious ideas; and yet the more corrupt it grew, the more obstinately and arrogantly did it refuse any concession to the new developments of the religious consciousness and to the growing demand for its own reform.

Such were the circumstances out of which the Reformation of the sixteenth century arose, the Reformation in which the division of Christendom, begun when the Western and Eastern Churches broke away from each other, was carried out to that point which we still see today. The division was not indeed a new thing, and in one sense the multiplication of the divisions brought no strictly new phenomena before the consciousness of the Church, but the older division was hardly apprehended, while the modern divisions force themselves upon the attention of every serious observer of the religious life.

The Reformation, in altering the conditions of Church life, necessarily brought with it new conceptions of the theory of the Church. I do not propose to discuss the details of the Reformation movement, but in order to perceive its essential and characteristic influence upon the conception of the Church, we are compelled to look at

some points in its history. The starting-point of the Reformation is usually taken to be the attack on the method of the indulgences by Luther: this is a true judgment, not only in the chronological but in the philosophical sense. For the dispute about the indulgences very rapidly raised the fundamental questions at issue in the Reformation. The important point in the dispute about the indulgences was the revolt of the serious religious spirit against the exaggeration and misapplication of the external and formal in the religious life. It was at first a question of proportion. Luther did not deny the power of the Pope to remit penance which he and the Church had imposed, but he did wholly deny the power of the Pope to remit the general consequences of sin, or its guilt, by the means of indulgences. In the main he protested against the use of exaggerated and false language about the indulgences, as that a man can through them be made sure of salvation. It is quite possible that some of Luther's phrases went beyond the premisses upon which he was consciously arguing; but in the main his contention was one for the internal in religion as opposed to the merely external. Unhappily, the Italian authorities of the Church misunderstood the gravity of the question; they did not perceive that Luther was only the mouthpiece of the growing sentiment of Christian men, especially in Northern Europe. They tried to silence Luther by bare authority. They urged that the question at issue was already closed by the authority of the Church. The result was, that what in Luther's mind had at first been only a movement for reform, became a movement of revolt. We may, I think, regard the characteristics of the movement from two aspects, the negative and the positive.

First, then, as to the negative side of the Reformation. Luther found himself confronted with the authority of the Catholic Church, when he urged the reform of a great

moral and religious abuse. He was thus driven to repudiate the authority which confronted him. At first no doubt it was simply the authority of the Pope, but gradually, as he came to perceive the extent to which the authority of the mediæval Church was involved in the question of the indulgences, he found himself obliged to repudiate the authority not of the Pope alone, but of the mediæval Church. And thus at last he repudiated the theory of the infallible spiritual authority even of the Universal Church.

Such were the steps through which Luther's declaration against the indulgences took him, and we can find them paralleled and illustrated in the larger history of the time. Those who will take the trouble to study the Confession of Augsburg with any care will see easily enough that its protest is directed mainly against the substitution of the formal for the spiritual in religion, of conventional works for those which are true and real, of pilgrimage for charity, etc. And exactly the same phenomena are apparent in the religious movement in England. A man like Latimer, who was never strictly a theologian, was moved to revolt by the sense of the external and conventional character of the common religion. It is thus easy to perceive in the Reformation movement in general the process by which a movement, at first one of practical reform, became a revolt against the authority of the Church, as enlisted against reform. We find men driven to appeal from the authority of the existing Church, and of the mediæval Church, to the authority of our Lord and of His Apostles as contained in the Scriptures.

On its negative side, then, the Reformation is a movement of revolt against the authority of the Church as it was, caused by the identification of that authority with what seemed, to men of a profoundly religious spirit, grave and serious abuses. Men revolted against this authority,

not at first on abstract, but on practical grounds, and appealed to the doctrine of our Lord and the Apostles as being the only ultimate standards of religious truth.

But the negative aspect of the Reformation is only one side of that great movement. Its positive side is quite as important, and remains of perpetual significance. The revolt against the system of the mediæval Church was a revolt not only against abuses in detail, but against a false conception of the religious life, against a conception which regarded religion as law. Over against this is set the conception that the foundation of individual religion is a principle of life within man's heart. This is the true meaning of the doctrine of Justification by Faith. No doubt there grew up a scholasticism of the doctrine of justification little more profitable than that of the fifteenth century, but the value of the central conception itself cannot well be denied by anyone who has ever understood it.

No doubt the doctrine of faith, of the relation of man to God through faith, had never been wholly lost in the Church. The immense influence of St. Augustine in Western Christendom, mischievous and narrowing as it had been in so many departments of theology, had yet also tended to preserve a sense of the deeper and profounder side of the religious experience, and consequently of the conception of faith in religion. But though the conception had remained in Christian theology, it had been so overlaid that its meaning was scarcely apprehended. It was the greatest service that Luther rendered to religion, that he once again brought the doctrine of St. Paul and St. John to its true place in the consciousness of Christian men. From his own profound religious experience he had learned that true peace of soul, the liberty of the religious life, can only be obtained when the soul of man is brought into a true relation with God, and that the only means of this is faith.

Luther was laying over again the foundations of the conception of freedom in religion, of spontaneity, of life, as contrasted with mere law. He has, of course, often been accused of having fostered an Antinomian spirit in religion, just as St. Paul was by some of his Judaising contemporaries. And I should not wish to say that Luther never used unwise or even foolish language in the stress of the great controversy. But if any man will be at the pains to read his little treatise on *The Liberty of the Christian Man* he will see that Luther, just as clearly as St. Paul, saw that true liberty was also true service.

There has been much dispute about the meaning of faith, and it may very well be admitted that faith is something very undefinable, very difficult to explain in set terms. But it will, I think, be sufficiently clear to anyone who will take the trouble to reflect, that faith is in religion something of the same nature as imagination in art, the faculty by which a man sees the truth, not merely as it is superficially or externally, but as it is really, the means by which, conversely, the man is possessed by that which he sees. It is the method of the free religious life, for it is by this that a man's heart is turned to love and to obedience, by this that a man is constrained to a service which is free because it is the servitude of love.

Luther's great apprehension of the New Testament doctrine did profoundly alter the character of the religious conceptions of Europe. In terms it was no doubt rejected by the Council of Trent, but no one who has studied the ambiguous, uncertain character of the statements which the Council of Trent put forward about faith, can fail to see that however anxious some divines might be to repudiate the position of Luther, his work had in large measure been done. The truth is no doubt that, just as in art people may continue to dispute about the

relative importance of law and liberty, while all the time the instinct of the true artist looks upon the two as forming one unity, so it is also in religion.

It is mainly to the Germans, to Lessing and Goethe, that we owe the recovery of the principle of freedom in art, and this is not unrelated to the fact that the principle of freedom and spontaneity in religion had been first recovered and restated by Luther in Germany.

What has been the influence exercised by the Reformation on the conception and condition of the Church? As we understand it, the Reformation was the inevitable result of the corruption of a society which looked upon its authority as absolute and its doctrine as infallible. The religious life of Northern Europe had outgrown the forms and methods of the Southern Church, and men broke away from an authority which, as it seemed to them, stood in the way of reform. It is no doubt true that, when it was too late, the Latin Church took in hand the task of partial reform, and purged itself of some of those elements which had first caused the revolt. But it still insisted on implicit obedience and submission, and Christian men were not prepared to submit their necks once again to the yoke of bondage; they felt that the right to make such claims had been forfeited. And when they looked back over the history of the Church in its earlier ages, they perceived that such a claim as that made by the Latin Church had no justification, that the authority of the Roman See was only the outgrowth of conditions which had once been real and important, but which had long since passed away. The repudiation of the supremacy of Rome and of the absolute authority of the mediæval Church was a necessary condition of the Reformation.

We find, then, that the Reformed Churches are all agreed in repudiating the conception that the universal

Church has or can have any absolute or infallible authority in religious matters. Our own Church expresses this very clearly in its statement on the subject of General Councils: "General Councils may not be gathered together without the authority of Princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the spirit and word of God), they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture" (Art. xxi.).

This is indeed the foundation of the position of the Reformed Churches. It is in virtue of this that we claim the right to re-examine and test the truth and value of doctrines or customs which have grown up round the Christian faith. Such questions cannot be taken as closed by invoking the authority of the Church. The Church must justify itself by its conformity with the norm of the teaching of our Lord.

It is no doubt true that this repudiation of the absolute authority of the mediæval Church, this interruption in the continuity of the development of the Christian society, has had its own lamentable consequences. The reaction against an exaggerated authority was so great that it has been often difficult to preserve the sense of authority in the religious societies. To this cause in part we may very well trace our deplorable divisions.

There is no Christian man who does not lament these unhappy divisions, who does not in some measure feel the terrible contrast between the ideal unity of the Church, of the one body of Christ, and the actual condition of Christendom. The East is separate from the West, and the West itself is rent and torn. We must feel that this condition of things is the result of great fault and sins in

the past, and that the Christian man who does not strive with all his heart and might for the reunion of Christendom incurs a terrible responsibility. We cannot stand idle while those who are brothers in Christ are separated from each other, while the work of the Christian Church is hampered and thwarted by our divisions. For it is unhappily only too true that the divisions of Christendom are not only in themselves deplorable, but that they do constantly and disastrously hinder the work of God in the world. Where there should be mutual sympathy and co-operation, we find only too often jealousy, rancour, and strife.

There may have been a time when Christian men accepted the fact of these divisions as inevitable, and thought little of unnecessary separation. This is happily not the tendency of our time, but rather we can see on every hand the signs of a growing and deepening feeling for the necessity of reunion.

And we also, in our own time, have learned much of the importance of the continuity of life and order in the religious as well as in the secular society; we have learned that every violent break with the past, even when inevitable, tends to maim and narrow the life of society. It is not so long ago since we in the reformed countries, and not least in England, were anxious only to repudiate the mistakes and conceptions of the past; now we are all anxious to show that we too are the true heirs of the past.

In the height of the great reaction against the corruptions and the despotism of the mediæval Church it was natural enough that the importance of the continuity and unity of the religious life should have been in some measure forgotten. Nowadays, while we think that the great revolt was justifiable, because it was necessary, we all recognise that it has had many melancholy consequences. It is not now of very much use to try to apportion the blame among those who may seem to have

been the direct causes of our divisions, but, whoever they are, their responsibility is a heavy one.

We do not look upon the tradition of the past as a burden and weight which we only want to shake off; rather we recognise the fulness and the beauty of the religious temper of past ages, but we have got rid of the dead hand; we do not allow the freedom of the life of man in God to be smothered in the formulas and traditions of the past.

The life of man cannot be conceived of as being ordered upon any mechanical principle; the life of man is continuous, but the forms and methods of life change from age to age. We are the same in our fundamental nature as the men to whom the Christian revelation came; we tend towards the same end, but also we are different. And the change will express itself in the different forms and methods of life. It is natural that some men should feel uneasy in the perpetual flux and movement of life; to them that which has been and is is perfectly satisfying. This temper is as natural as it is common. But after all it is surely not the truest temper; this is surely not the true way in which we should look out upon the great spectacle of the movement and progress of the world; nor is this the right temper in which we should set out to deal with the actual problems of life and religion. We recognise that the past had its good, but its good was not the same exactly as ours.

And therefore, though we lament (who does not?) the divisions and perplexities of our time, though we feel that the condition of the Christian Church is not that which it should be, we should surely try to do what we can under our present conditions, while we also try to remedy them, rather than stand on one side in a fruitless and unavailing anger or sorrow. For the Spirit of God still calls men to one life, the souls of men are still united in Christ, and the prayers of men still go up to the one Father.

VII.

THE SACRAMENTS

By W. R. INGE

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The forms in which the religious consciousness finds expression are necessarily determined by the needs of those who use them . . 271

Rudimentary sacraments are found in the most primitive religions in connexion with sacrifices. The ideas which they express are: (1) the establishment of bonds of guest-friendship with the tribal god; (2) acquisition of divine qualities by sacramentally eating the gifts of the god or the flesh of his totem-animal; (3) atonement for sin by the sacrifice of the totem-animal, which represents both the god and his worshippers 273

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IF we wish to understand any one of the great factors which together constitute the organic life of civilisation, we must consider it not only in its highest, nor only in its lowest forms. The true nature of an institution is

to be sought neither by going back to the conditions under which its earliest beginnings can be traced, nor by postulating the imaginary conditions under which its idea might be most perfectly realised. Institutions are for men, not for angels or for beasts. They can only operate in subjection to the moral, intellectual, and physical limitations of human society—limitations which are not the same at all times or places, nor in all social strata at the same time and place. They justify their existence by satisfying the requirements of those who use them, and the validity of the particular forms which they assume must always be considered in relation to the needs of the community in which they exist.

It is from this standpoint that I wish to consider the subject of the Christian Sacraments, which have played, and are still destined to play, a most important part in the spiritual development of the human race. And I think it necessary, by way of preface, to trace briefly the evolution of the sacramental idea from its first beginnings in the dim dawn of human intelligence. I hope that the time is come when a Christian writer may do this without giving offence. I hope that the intelligent reader will not be shocked to find very close and striking analogies between the two great Sacraments of our Church and similar institutions beyond the Christian pale. I hope that his pride will not be wounded when he is shown rudimentary sacraments even among primitive and savage races. The Word of God, by whom the worlds were made, has never left Himself without witness; there is no race of mankind, however barbarous, to whom He has not spoken. All who have turned to Him, however ignorantly, have eaten of the same spiritual meat and drunk of the same spiritual drink; they have received what they were able to receive; even as we, who know a little more than they, receive what

we are able to receive, and store in earthen vessels our few grains of the divine wisdom.

The most primitive form of sacrament arises from a wish to establish friendly relations with the tribal god by offering him hospitality. The food set apart for the deity is in this case not a sacrifice of expiation: the object of the rite is simply to make the god and his worshippers commensals and guest-friends. But another idea soon enters the mind of the primitive worshipper. His god is often the god of the fruits of the earth; and so in the sacramental meal the tribe feasts upon the gifts of the god, and even, in a sense, upon the god himself. This aspect of the rite is accentuated by the belief, which is common to all primitive peoples, that by eating anything we assimilate its qualities. Thus in many parts of the world the savage will not eat venison, lest it should make him cowardly; and we have stories from Corea and other places, of natives eating the tiger and other carnivorous animals, to increase their courage and fierceness. The principle of substitution or representation, which is almost universally accepted in early religion, makes the idea of a symbolical eating of the god, in order to acquire his virtues or power, quite natural to the savage; and a deeper significance is given to the rite by the curious superstition called totemism. The totem is generally an animal, which is believed to be akin both to the god and his worshippers, and which, therefore, is far too sacred to be killed and eaten on any ordinary occasion, or even in a honorific sacrifice. But when the sacrifice is an atonement for sin, the totem-animal may be, and generally is, the victim. The god demands the shedding of life-blood to expiate the tribe's offence, but accepts the animal as a substitute for the guilty human beings. In so accepting it he in a sense himself dies for the sins of his people, for the totem-animal is his representative as well as theirs. Orig-

inally, we may conjecture, the two kinds of sacrifice, honorific and piacular, were distinct, and no sacramental meal followed the sacrifice of the totem-animal. But the opportunity offered by the sacrifice to assimilate the qualities of the slain god soon led to the custom of reverently partaking of the flesh of the totem-animal. The rite is one of awful solemnity; for the flesh of this animal is in the highest degree *taboo*, and to touch it under any other circumstances would be shocking sacrilege. A good example of this rite is furnished by the Athenian festival of the Diipolia, which, like some other Athenian ceremonies, was a survival of very primitive religious ideas. The slaughter of the sacred bull at this feast was regarded as a dreadful murder, but the priests taught that "the dead was raised again in the same sacrifice," its life being renewed in those who partook of it. In consequence of the tremendous import of the totem-sacrifice, the most stringent precautions are taken to prevent any profanation of the sacred body, which is still capable of conveying deadly taboo-contagion. Among the Mongols and Red Indians, and (as Pausanias tells us) among the Arcadians and Locrians, it was sacrilege to leave any part of the victim unconsumed. The hoofs, bones, and entrails are generally burnt, the whole of the flesh is eaten. Again, the *whole* tribe must partake; this is insisted upon in North and South America, and by many African peoples. The meaning of this provision I will explain presently. Fasting and other modes of purification generally precede the sacrifice. In some cases, where the deity is a corn-god or goddess, the communicants partake of bread, which they call the flesh of the god, in others, of wine, which is regarded as the blood of the wine-god. The Mexicans ate sacramentally a dough image of their war-god Huitzilopotchli. They received the bread, we are told, "with tears, fear, and reverence, saying that they did eat the flesh and bones

of God, wherewith they were grieved. Such as had any sick folks demanded thereof for them, and carried it with great reverence and veneration."[1] This close connexion between the oblation of the fruits of the earth and the symbolic eating of the god marks the fusion of honorific and piacular sacrifice. As a stage in the purification of the sacrificial idea it is of great importance, for the conceptions both of honorific and of piacular sacrifice are transformed by it. The process of thought may be traced as follows. The earliest notion is, that God is a jealous God, who requires honours and presents, like an earthly potentate. Later, men come to realise that it is of His own that we give to Him; that it is Himself that we lay before Him; that it is Himself that He gives to us in return. The oblation is only the preliminary to communion. Or again, the primitive notion is, that God is angry with us, and will have our blood. Then follows the conviction that He will take a substitute, and lastly, that He will give Himself as a substitute. Thus the piacular sacrifice is transmuted into the sacrament of an atonement, in which the priest, the victim, the deity, and the worshippers are all made *one*. Herein lies the perfect realisation of the idea of sacrifice.

In order to make this unification complete, it was necessary that the *covenant* sacrifice, which was not quite the same as the thank-offering or peace-offering, should be included in the sacrament. This was readily accomplished; for in primitive religion these rites are generally almost as much sacraments of brotherhood between members of the tribe as of union or friendship with the deity. It was deemed that by mixing or tasting each other's blood, or by sharing the blood of the totem-animal, a close and sacred relation of brotherhood was established; and this is why every member of the tribe was obliged to join in the ceremony. In

[1] Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, vol. ii. pp. 356–360.

primitive societies the religious body is naturally the tribe, but in more civilised states we generally find, besides the official cultus, voluntary associations for religious purposes. In Greece and her colonies these associations first appear about the seventh century B.C. The Eleusinian mysteries are only the most famous of a large number of religious brotherhoods which from this time began to spread all over the Greek world. Owing to the reserve and even secrecy which it was obligatory to maintain about these ceremonies, the notices of them in literature are very scanty in proportion to their influence and importance; but what we know is sufficient to throw much light on the nature of sacramental religion generally, and on its development, under Greek influences, in the Christian Church. It is a real misfortune that so many persons have written on the Christian sacraments in the first centuries of our era without any knowledge of the contemporary pagan culture to which the Church was so greatly indebted. The subject is of such great importance to all who are interested in church history that I propose to devote one or two pages to a brief consideration of it.

If it is asked, What was the main inducement held out in the Greek mysteries? we may answer confidently that it was happiness in a future state. Plutarch quotes Sophocles as saying—

> "Thrice happy they who while they dwell on earth
> Have gazed upon these holy mysteries;
> For theirs alone is life beyond the grave,
> Where others find but woe and misery."

And Plato tells us that the priests of the mysteries taught that those who had been purified and initiated will dwell with the gods after their death, while the rest of mankind will be plunged in a kind of slough of despond. The gift of immortality was perhaps typified

at Eleusis by an ear of corn, as in St. Paul's well-known simile. But the Greek mysteries never taught the resurrection of the flesh. They conceived of immortality as a participation in the life of the gods, whose chief prerogative was immunity from decay and death. The mysteries were believed to confer this boon; and, as might have been expected, the belief was held both in a crude and in a refined form. The more elevated doctrine was that by the purifying influence of this worship the human spirit underwent a progressive deification. Salvation was regarded as a change of inner condition, an advance towards perfection which was already begun. The sacrament was valued mainly as bringing the worshipper into the immediate presence of God. So Plutarch says, "It is not the wine nor the meat that refreshes us in these feasts, but good hope, and faith that God is present with us, that He accepts our service, and is well pleased with it." The cruder form was the unethical belief that salvation is conferred *ex opere operato* by the sacrament of initiation.

The ceremonies connected with these associations naturally fall under two heads—those of initiation and those of membership. As the mystery-worship had its origin to a large extent in the consciousness of sin, we may expect to find that purgation and release from guilt formed the most important part in the rite of admission. Nor can we be surprised, since we are dealing with the most tenaciously conservative of all human instincts, to find that, together with the moral sense of uncleanness in the sight of God, were mingled many relics of primitive superstition, according to which men contract impurity by external contact with things "unclean" or *taboo*. From both these kinds of defilement cleansing was sought sacramentally. The "elements" in the purgative sacrament were naturally those used in

cleansing—first and foremost, water; but also fire and steam, sulphur, loam, and clay, and in some cases the blood of a sacrificed victim. This last, however, seems properly to belong to the covenant sacrifice. The word "regeneration" was used of the state inaugurated by baptism, both in the Greek mysteries and by the Jews who baptised proselytes.[1] Among the Greeks initiation of infants was by no means uncommon, as is proved by numerous inscriptions, in which children of seven years old or less are described as "priests" in the mysteries of Dionysus and other deities. "Trine immersion" was a familiar form of lustration in paganism, as we know from Virgil, Ovid, and Juvenal. As to the moral effect of this ceremonial washing, we find, as we might expect, the same conflict of opinion as has been mentioned in the case of the sacramental meal, and as appeared later in the Christian Church. While the priests and others connected with the mysteries naturally extolled the virtues of the sacrament in and by itself, others protested against ascribing to it any such miraculous potency, and appealed both to experience and to the moral sense on the other side. Diogenes is said to have asked whether the robber Pataecion was better off in the other world than the hero Epaminondas, because the former had been initiated, and the latter not. And Ovid, rightly tracing the *ex opere operato* theory to a Greek source, exclaims—

> "Graecia principium moris fuit; illa nocentes
> Impia lustratos ponere facta putat.
> A! nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina caedis
> Fluminea tolli posse putetis aqua!"[2]

The ceremonies of membership consisted mainly of the sacramental meal, which has already been in part discussed.

[1] There seems to be no doubt that proselytes were baptised before John the Baptist, and that the rite was intended to symbolise or effect the cleansing of the neophyte from the pollutions of his former life.

[2] OVID, *Fasti*, ii. 35.

Such meals were a regular institution in some of the "associations for the sake of sacrifice" (θίασοι θυσίας ἕνεκα)—brotherhoods of persons engaged in the same trade, who therefore wished to worship the same tutelary deity. But these "covenant-sacrifices" were perhaps more fully developed in other races (of whose ceremonies some account has already been given) and in the Jewish ritual. We may compare especially the description given in Exodus xxiv. 8, a passage which I think has a closer connexion with the institution of the Eucharist than has been generally recognised. We read there that half of the sacrificial blood was sprinkled on the people, the object being not to expiate their sin, but to bring them into relation with the sacrifice and renew the covenant with God.

The examples which I have given will be enough to show that both the idea of sacramental worship and the forms under which it is performed by the Christian Church are the almost universal heritage of mankind. The symbolic uses of washing and eating are the most natural, the simplest, and the most widely diffused of all such ceremonies. So natural are they that we may say with some confidence that if Christ had not instituted Baptism and the Eucharist the Church would have had to invent them. A Christianity without sacraments could never have converted Europe. In fact, the two great Sacraments were almost the only Christian rites which answered to the ancient idea of religion as *cultus*—as the performance of some prescribed form of service to the Deity. But it does not follow that all the ideas which have gathered round these rites are of equal value, or that Christ in instituting the Sacraments meant to enjoin or tolerate them all. There is, as I hope to show, the strongest reason for thinking that He did not. But He chose the two simplest, most universal, and most easily understood of all such ceremonies, because it was necessary that the

Christian worship should be of a kind which might give as much comfort and help to the unlearned and ignorant as to the philosopher, to the Gentile as to the Jew.

All the records of our Lord's life and teaching show that it was part of His method to use the old whenever He could. Even in His discourses a large number of His maxims had been uttered before by the Rabbis. Whatever He took He made His own; the new spirit was able to assimilate and transmute the old without danger. But there is one striking exception. Our Lord did not attempt to utilise the existing religious *cultus* of His own nation. He did not enjoin circumcision. He never connected the new covenant, which He came to proclaim and to seal, with the Jewish sacrifices and priesthood. And though He Himself and His disciples, who had been born under the old dispensation, conformed and were "obedient to the law," He declared emphatically that the law and the prophets "were until John," and that the proclamation of the kingdom of God marked a beginning of a new order. This being so, there can be no more perverse error than to suppose that He intended the Eucharist to be in any sense a continuation of the Jewish sacrifices, or the Christian ministry to be in any sense the successors of the Jewish priests. The series of Jewish sacrifices culminated in the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, and ended there. Those sacrifices, like those of other early religions, had been (as I have shown) partly presents or tenders of hospitality to the Deity, partly offerings to placate His wrath, and partly the forms by which the covenant between God and His people was ratified and renewed. Prophets and psalmists had long ago tried to purify and elevate the current conceptions of sacrifice, protesting that Jehovah does not eat bull's flesh nor drink the blood of goats; that He will not be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers

of oil; that His just anger will not be appeased by any bloody sacrifice, not even if a man should give his firstborn for his transgressions, the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul; that the time was coming when God should write a new covenant in the hearts of His people. But these admonitions had not been listened to. We must not forget that the full development of the ceremonial law came after, not before, the prophets and psalms; in its arrogant completeness the Law was not an old thing in our Lord's time: as usually happens, its tyranny was most imposing when it was tottering to its fall. The true idea of sacrifice, as I have said, is realised when priest and victim, God and worshippers, are *atoned* or united. This atonement, which had been already symbolised in the fully developed sacrifice under the old covenant, was achieved once for all by Christ, when He who is both God and man offered Himself, and us His members in Himself, as an expiation for sin. Herein the idea which had been adumbrated with varying clearness by all previous sacrifices was fully realised. The antitype had now been manifested, and the type or symbol was now abrogated for ever.

It is plain that this abrogation of the old sacrificial priesthood was understood by the Christian Church in the generation after our Lord. The silence of St. Paul on the subject of the priesthood is extremely significant. When he enumerates the various offices to which men are called in the Church, he mentions apostles, prophets, workers of miracles, etc., but he never says, "He gave some, priests." Among the numerous detailed directions which he gives to the Churches there is not a word about the proper manner of offering sacrifice. He recognises no sacrifices, except, on the one hand, the sacrifice of Christ and, on the other, the sacrifice of our own bodies in reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1). The breach of con-

tinuity between the Jewish priesthood and the Christian ministry is complete. The former ends with Christ, the latter begins afresh from Him.

But though this is indisputable, it is necessary to consider what is the significance of the facts that Christ Himself accepted baptism from John the Baptist; that He authorised the rite of baptism, which was so closely connected with the mission of the last of the prophets; and that the original Lord's Supper was either a paschal meal or in closest connexion with the Passover. The original significance of baptism was repentance and conversion (*μετάνοια*), with which went remission of sins. But while John baptised with water, the Christian was baptised "with the Holy Ghost." The Acts of the Apostles shows that a visible manifestation of the Holy Ghost was expected to follow the imposition of hands, which was then regarded as the completion of the baptismal rite. So St. Paul (1 Cor. xii. 13) says, "By one Spirit were ye all baptised into one body." But the most salient difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism is that indicated in the last words of the verse just quoted. The baptism of John regarded the individual only, while Christian baptism was above all things an admission into the privileges of membership in Christ's body. Such phrases as "baptised into Jesus Christ" or "into the death of Jesus Christ" show how much this idea had come into prominence. It may even be, as Weizsäcker[1] suggests, that converts were formally baptised "into one body" as well as "into the name of Christ," or with the Trinitarian formula, which was certainly very early in use. Our Lord's teaching

[1] This writer (*Apostolic Age*, vol. ii. 252, English edition) thinks it very doubtful whether Christ instituted baptism as a rite of admission to His society. The point, of course, cannot be proved either way; but considering how fully established the practice was when St. Paul wrote, I cannot see why we should dispute the tradition.

as to the sacramental grace conferred in baptism is confined to one chapter of St. John—the discourse to Nicodemus. It would be impossible here to discuss the historical accuracy of the reports of our Lord's discourses in the fourth Gospel. It is possible, as Wendt thinks, that the word "water" in verse 5 is an interpolation, since nothing more is said about water in the context. But we are on sure ground when we say that the main difference between John's baptism and that of Christ was that which I have mentioned—that the latter gave admission to the Church, the mystical body of Christ, and therewith brought the gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptism was thus designed to take the place of circumcision; and it is surely significant that our Lord ignored the legal rite of admission, and put in its place one not enjoined in the written law.

The connexion of the Passover with Holy Communion is that of type to commemoration. Both point to the great central fact—the death of Christ. It was certainly not intended that the Church should forget the symbolism of the Passover (1 Cor. v. 7). But the Eucharist perpetuated the paschal meal, not any priestly sacrifice, and the identification of Christ Himself with the Paschal Lamb made any real repetition of the sacrifice impossible.[1]

It is plain, then, that no theory of continuity between Jewish and Christian *cultus* can be built either on John's baptism or on the Passover. Let us next consider what

[1] There is no agreement as to whether the words in John vi., supposing them to be correctly reported, refer specifically to the Sacrament which had not yet been instituted, or not. Probably when our Lord said, "Except ye eat," etc. (*v.* 53), He had in His mind the solemn rite which He purposed to found, but intended the words to have a wider, more general, and more metaphorical meaning. It is in the highest degree unlikely that He was thinking only or chiefly of participation in a Sacrament which was not to begin till after His death. The Greek Fathers, as Waterland and Jeremy Taylor show, are nearly all against the Eucharistic reference.

were the elements in the Jewish sacrificial worship which our Lord wished to exclude; for His attitude cannot be otherwise explained. In the first place, bloody sacrifices were for ever abolished. The bloody sacrifice, if honorific, assumes that God will eat bull's flesh and drink the blood of goats; if piacular, that the blood of an animal or of a human being will be accepted by God as an expiation of the guilt of the worshippers. The doctrine of substitution (vicarious punishment) is unethical, though that of vicarious suffering is not. Jesus Christ was able by His death to atone God and man because He was God as well as man. No other bloodshedding could take away sin. Bloody sacrifices, therefore, and the doctrine of substitution were abolished. Further, since it was one object of the Incarnation to give to all faithful people immediate access to God, the Jewish priesthood, with its special prerogative of offering acceptable sacrifices, could no longer have any place. Whatever delegation of privilege might be made for the sake of order and discipline in the Christian Church, the caste-distinctions which are maintained in the stories about the fate of Korah and his company, and the death of Uzzah, have nothing corresponding to them in Christianity. The Christian Sacrament of admission does not absolutely require the mediation of a priest; the Christian Sacrament of membership was designed to be a spiritual sacrifice offered to God by a royal priesthood comprising all the Christian body. These differences between the Jewish and the Christian Sacraments are sufficient to explain our Lord's evident intention to break the continuity.

The results at which we have arrived so far may be thus summed up. The need of Sacraments has been universally felt both by savage and civilised mankind. It has been met everywhere in much the same way—by attributing a mysterious efficacy to certain prescribed

symbolical acts, which are generally chosen from the simplest and commonest functions of ordinary life, such as washing and eating. The special boons which the worshippers expect to obtain by these ceremonies are the goodwill and protection of the Deity, the forgiveness of their sins, the acquisition of divine grace by mystical union with God, and the consecration of human bonds of brotherhood by the solemn communion of every member of the society in the presence of God. We have seen that our Lord not only gave His sanction to these religious aspirations, and confirmed in the most explicit manner the belief as to the relation between God and man upon which they rest, but that He chose as vehicles of the graces which He promised the most familiar and universal of all sacramental forms. But we have seen also that He found it necessary to make a breach with one of the most highly organised institutions which had ever been formed for the conservation of a national *cultus;* although He knew that the result of doing so would be an internecine warfare between His Gospel and the hierarchy of His own nation. My argument is that His action proves (1) that a sacramental system is necessary to true religion, (2) that there are developments of the sacramental system which are irreconcilable with it.

Having got thus far, I will proceed to consider shortly what were the chief accretions from without which gathered round these institutions, and what changes, if any, came over the Church's conception of the two great Sacraments. This done, I will conclude by offering some considerations as to what these two Sacraments should mean for us to-day—not with any arrogant expectation of arriving at the final truth on one of the most mysterious of all subjects, but in the hope that they may help us to get from these holy mysteries all the good that we are able to assimilate.

Our information about the primitive ritual at the Lord's Supper is sadly defective, and on some points there is room for considerable divergence of opinion. I must therefore ask pardon for stating briefly and somewhat dogmatically what I believe to be the most probable facts, since in an essay of this kind a full discussion of controverted points would be impossible.

The original Eucharist immediately followed a common meal, as the Didaché expressly tells us. The ceremony at first consisted of two parts: (1) an oblation, with thanksgiving, of the fruits of the earth; (2) the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. From the very first the thank-offering was combined with charitable gifts to the poor. This last was in accordance with a specifically Jewish doctrine, that gifts to God may be bestowed upon the poor instead, and that alms thus given are a true and acceptable sacrifice (see Eccles. xxxii. 2; Phil. iv. 18; Heb. xiii. 16). Part of the thank-offering was, however, sacramentally eaten. The Didaché indicates that, according to the original idea, the offering was of the fruits of the earth, not of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is of these oblations, and not of the administration of the elements, that sacrificial language is used by the early Fathers. Not until Cyprian do we find the doctrine that the Body and Blood of Christ are offered in sacrifice, and it was perhaps not till the ninth century that "the central point of the sacrificial idea was shifted from the oblation of the fruits of the earth to the offering of the Body and Blood of Christ."[1] But though these oblations and the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ seem to have originally formed two parts of the service, it does not follow that they were ever disconnected, and still less that the fusion of the two into one office was a retrogression. On the contrary, the oblation of the

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Sacrifice," by Prof. HATCH.

fruits of the earth gained a much deeper meaning when it was brought into closer connexion with the great Sacrament. The fruits of the earth are, in a sense, the Body of Christ, who has hallowed anew by His Incarnation all natural substances, which owe their existence to Him as the Instrument in creation. As Irenæus says, "Since we are members of Him, and are nourished by the creature, and He Himself provides us with the creatures, He confessed the cup which the creature supplies to be His own Blood, and the bread supplied by the creature to be His own Body." Thus the thank-offering became fused easily and naturally with the Holy Communion, and enriched its significance by making it also an act of oblation, and of self-oblation on the part of the worshippers. Thus the deepest meaning of the Eucharist was brought out. The spiritual sacrifice in Holy Communion is the self-consecration of the faithful. But it is only in and with Christ, and by virtue of His oblation of Himself, which is for ever "pleaded before the throne of God," that we, as His mystical Body, are able to consecrate ourselves. We may therefore consider that the fusion of the old "oblation" with the sacramental meal was a perfectly legitimate and beneficial development of the original institution.

We must now revert to the Greek mysteriosophy and its influence upon the Sacraments. And for our present purpose it really does not matter much whether those ideas which are most characteristic of the Greek mystery-worship were directly borrowed by the Church, or whether they arose spontaneously in the latter, under the same influences which produced them in the former. Personally I have no doubt that there was a good deal of direct, deliberate borrowing; but this is a matter which can hardly be proved. It is, of course, well known to all educated men that the early Christians who spoke in

Greek—that is to say, the large majority of the Church—called the sacraments *mysteries* (μυστήρια). The name is much more significant than the Latin word *sacramentum;* for this latter very early acquired a peculiar and technical meaning, which cannot be paralleled from its uses in pagan literature.[1] The word "mystery," on the other hand, had a clearly defined meaning in religious language, and when we find it adopted as the regular name of the Christian Sacraments, we are justified in concluding that the Church considered that in the Sacraments it had an organised *cultus* of the same kind as the Greek mysteries. The case is strengthened when we find that not only the word "mystery," but the whole terminology of the mysteries, was habitually used by Christians of their Sacraments. To give a few examples only: Baptism is initiation (μύησις); the unbaptised are the uninitiated (οἱ ἀμύητοι); the Christian priest is the "mystagogue of hidden mysteries" (Gregory of Nyssa). The delivery of the sacred elements is παράδοσις, a technical word of the mysteries, and the words "seal" and "illumination," which were applied to Baptism, were familiar to all who knew the Greek ritual.

What, then, were the leading ideas suggested by the word "mystery"? Primarily, symbolism. "One thing is seen, another is understood," as St. Augustine says, or, in St. Chrysostom's words, "We see one thing and believe another." According to the mystical philosophy of the time, every stage in the moral and intellectual life of man presents us at once with a thing and the covering of a thing. The whole world is a system of great, graduated,

[1] The transition from the classical usage is best illustrated from Pliny's famous letter to Trajan about the Christians, in which he says that they bind themselves by a *sacramentum* not to commit any crime, but to abstain from wrong-doing. In the Vulgate we have *sacramentum* used as a translation of μυστήριον in Ephesians v. 32; 1 Timothy iii. 16; Revelation i. 20, xvii. 7; and in earlier Latin versions in Romans xvi. 25; 1 Corinthians xiii. 2, where the Vulgate has *mysterium*.

ordered mysteries, through which we pass successively till we arrive at the beatific vision. From this point of view all life is sacramental, though not in the same degree, and everything that reveals to us the nature or purposes of God may be called a sacrament. So Justin and Tertullian call the Crucifixion a sacrament; Leo frequently calls the Incarnation a sacrament; revealed truths and even pious opinions are called *mysteriorum sacramenta* by Isidore; and Hugo of St. Victor enumerates thirty, giving Baptism and the Eucharist the first place. Though this view of life as sacramental may tend to derogate somewhat from the exclusive dignity of the great sacraments, it imports no new idea into the conception of a sacrament, but rather helps us to understand what a sacrament is.

But the mysteries had other associations, some of which were more foreign to our Lord's institution. Such were those of an *arcanum*, or secret—the importation of a kind of freemasonry into religion; that of sacerdotalism—the notion that God has explicitly limited Himself to certain prescribed channels, places, ministers, formulas, of grace; the sensuous-mystical or ritualistic element, in which various vague associations of ideas, conveyed by appeals to the several senses, are awakened in order to deepen the impression produced by the ceremony; and lastly, the close connexion between initiation and the hope of a *future* life, whereby the sacrament came to be regarded as a "medicine of immortality," rather than, as Christ intended, a symbol of an actually existing blessed fellowship never to be dissolved.

Let us consider these in order. Nothing is more human than curiosity on the one hand and satisfaction at the possession of a secret on the other. And in early times nothing seemed more natural than to ascribe a certain potency and sacredness to names—to suppose, for instance, that a person receives some real injury when his name is

taken in vain. And so we find that secret religious formulæ are jealously guarded by many barbarous nations. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that the early Christians were not only anxious to preserve their most sacred ceremonies from profanation and ridicule by the heathen, but that they sometimes sought to invest their sacraments with an atmosphere of mystery and even of terror. To this tendency we must ascribe such adjectives as "dread" and "horrible," which we often find applied to the sacraments. But it is not likely that Christ intended us to approach His table in a servile and trembling spirit, or that He gave the Church any secrets to guard.

The next point is one of far greater importance. We have seen that St. Paul pointedly ignores the office of priest when he is legislating for his Churches, and that no continuity can be asserted between the Jewish and Christian priesthood. Still less can it be supposed that Christ intended the "stewards of the mysteries of God" to claim the powers and imitate the methods of the priests of Mithras and Zagreus. But the approximation was so rapid that even Justin Martyr accuses the worshippers of Mithras of plagiarising from Christian ceremonies. A still earlier instance is that of baptism for the dead, to which St. Paul refers (1 Cor. xv. 29), but surely not with approval, and with which we may compare the legend which Hermas recounts, that Christ baptised the Old Testament saints in Hades, thereby conferring upon them the necessary "seal" of salvation. Masses for the dead are another product of this unethical mechanical theory of the efficacy of sacraments. Now this idea seems to come straight from the mysteries. Plato speaks of ceremonies of deliverance and purification performed in the mysteries "for quick and dead" (Plato, *Politicus*, 364), and an Orphic fragment makes mention of masses "for the deliverance of sinful ancestors." And the doctrine *extra ecclesiam*

nulla salus is exactly that of the mysteries, which taught that the uninitiated shall all be immersed in mud after their death. There can be no doubt that a coarsening of the idea of the boons conferred in the Sacraments was coincident with the great influx of pagans into the Church. More particularly is this true in relation to the consecrated elements in Holy Communion. We have seen that at first the "sacrifice" was only an offering of the fruits of the earth, and that afterwards, by a perfectly natural and legitimate extension, this sacrifice was joined with the sacramental meal, and made to symbolise the sacrifice of ourselves, which by virtue of our union with Christ we are privileged to offer to God. The Greeks are fond of using such phrases as "the unbloody sacrifice," "the immaterial and mental sacrifice," of the Eucharist, in order to emphasise its unique character. But after the great influx of pagans into the Church, the pagan-Jewish notion of piacular sacrifice insidiously reintroduced itself. The legitimate conception of the Eucharist as a symbolic representation of the sacrifice of Christ was hardened into that of an actual continuation or repetition of that sacrifice. And therewith we find a growing tendency to use materialistic language about the sacred elements, a tendency which is pagan but not Jewish. Chrysostom almost revels in such repulsive phrases as, "We bury our teeth in His flesh"; "Our tongues are red with His most sacred blood." Such "gross surmises" were as foreign to Christ's original institution as they were familiar to Orientalised Hellenism.

The Church had again its bloody sacrifice, though the blood was not visible. The doctrine of transubstantiation, however, was slow in formulating itself. In Gregory it is the form and not the substance of the elements which is changed; indeed, the doctrine of transformation (not transubstantiation), which is carefully stated by John of

Damascus, is the doctrine of the Greek Church to this day. So long as Christian philosophy remained predominantly Platonic, the materialisation of the Eucharist could not be complete. Indeed, the danger was rather in the opposite direction. For in the first place the conception of spiritual progress as a process of simplification (ἁπλωσις)—the negative road of the mystics—is in reality antagonistic to sacramentalism, except as a concession to human weakness. Dionysius says that "most of us" do not believe what we are told about the sacraments, because we only look at them through the sensuous symbols which "have become attached to them." If we would "strip them and see them naked and pure," we should be able to contemplate and worship "the fountain of life which pours into itself," "which supplies the science of all sciences, and is always itself seen by itself." And in the second place, the whole doctrine of transubstantiation rests upon the Stoical or Aristotelian distinction of "substance" and "accidents," which is quite contrary to Platonism.[1] Origen teaches that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is real *because* it is spiritual and not corporeal. But pressure was exerted upon the Church from many sides to restore the pagan-Jewish hierarchy and sacrifices. The Roman Empire and the ancient Jewish religion were two great facts which suggested analogies that could not be put out of sight. Even Clement of Rome attempts to justify a Christian hierarchy by these two analogies. In civil affairs, he says, "all are arranged, from the Emperor downwards, in a carefully graduated hierarchical system. Such must be the unity of the Body of Christ. It must be based on mutual submission, dependence, and subordination. So the Jewish Church also had its hierarchy, high priests, Levites, and people." If this could be written at the end of the first century, how much more over-

[1] cf. BIGG, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 219.

whelming must have been the influence of such analogies some centuries later, when the empire had been Orientalised, and liberty had ceased to be even a memory! The restored sacerdotalism, and the eucharistic doctrine attached to it, not only gratified the religious instincts of the majority, who had never really been converted from paganism, but, as Harnack says,[1] gathered up and secured all that the Church most prized—"its dogma, its mystical relation to Christ, the fellowship of believers, the priest, the sacrifice, the miraculous power which God had given to His Church, and the satisfaction of the sensuous impulse in piety." It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that the externalisation of sacramental doctrine was most rigidly formulated in the time of the Church's greatest power. It was not till the authority of Rome was questioned, and her supremacy menaced, that these weapons were given their sharpest edge. At the Council of Trent the exclusive prerogatives of the Roman Catholic Church were asserted in a cruder and less ethical form than ever before. And the nineteenth century has witnessed a yet lower decline.[2] The Roman Church now teaches distinctly that each Eucharist is a propitiatory sacrifice offered to the Father, and that the whole Christ, including His human soul and divine nature, is contained in each crumb of bread. The retrogression can only be explained by the complete alienation of independent thought from the Roman Church, and by the tendency of all weak governments to use any weapons by which their authority may be maintained.

[1] HARNACK, *History of Dogma*, vol. vi. p. 233 (English translation).

[2] MOBERLY, *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 350, quotes the following utterance of Cardinal Vaughan: "Did they [the Anglican clergy] claim the power to produce the actual living Christ Jesus by transubstantiation upon the altar according to the claim of the Eastern and Western Churches?" His object is to prove that the Anglican Eucharist is "an essentially different sacrifice" from the Roman, since our clergy "claim no miraculous, supernatural sacrificial powers."

The use of an impressive ritual, which was the third point that I mentioned as characteristic of the Greek mysteries, was no doubt foreign to the first generation of Christians, but only because they had no opportunities of practising it. Such appeals to the senses as beautiful architecture, solemn music, reverent gestures, symbolic colours, incense, and the like, are so natural and universal that it would be absurd to suppose that the Christian Church would not have evolved them spontaneously. And it is almost equally foolish to argue that because Christ did not enjoin them He would therefore have disapproved of them.

The close connexion of sacramental grace with the hope of happiness hereafter can hardly be dissociated in Church history from the ideas which have been discussed under the second heading. There is evidence to show that the notion of the sacramental elements as elixirs of life passed from the mysteries into the minds of the Greek Fathers. Thus was strengthened the tendency to view salvation too exclusively under the form of time — a mistake which leads to many intellectual difficulties and some loss to the spiritual life. Our Lord's words, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life," have a far richer meaning than is conveyed by the favourite phrase, "medicine of immortality."

It is not my intention to give any further historical facts about the sacramental doctrine of the Church. What I have written about the pagan mysteries and the primitive cults of other races has been written mainly with a view to prove that the Sacraments, as we know them, contain elements which were not originated by Christ, nor ordained by Him, but which may be considered the common products of all religions. I have also been at pains to show that some of these elements are, to say the least, very susceptible of perversion. There is always a residue of

barbarism in the minds even of the most civilised peoples, which tends to drag back their religion to forms which are not only pre-Christian, but which belong to those conceptions of the relation between God and man which Christ intended to abolish for ever. I wish now to attempt, in more detail, to disengage the wheat from the chaff in this great matter.

The first question which must occupy us is this: Can the use of material symbols in religion be defended, except as milk for babes? For instance, is not spiritual communion a higher act of worship than the Lord's Supper, supposing the feelings of the worshipper to be equally devotional? Ought we not to try to dispense with the sensuous and mechanical element as far as possible? These questions have been answered in the affirmative by the Quakers, who are perhaps for that reason the most consistent representatives of one type of contemplative mysticism. They agree with the Ebionites of the first century, who taught that our Lord declared, "I am come to abolish sacrifices." This is a type of religion which has appeared several times in the history of Christianity. Some of the pantheistic mystics of the Middle Ages tried to dispense with sacraments; but their reputation was by no means so untarnished as that of the Society of Friends, and their systems were short-lived. The historian must admit that non-sacramental Christianity has never been popular or successful. To many this will seem a sufficient refutation of it as a practical form of religion. If Christianity was intended to be an universal religion, it must not dispense with rites which to many express the very idea of religious worship. But I do not think that we need content ourselves with this argument from expediency. Why should we consider that a spiritual act is coarsened and spoilt by being translated into symbolic action? We have not (unless we are Quietists) the same

feeling about language, which is also a symbolic, or rather a conventional, representation of ideas. It is no vulgarisation of the mysteries of grace to associate them with such trivial actions as washing and eating. A spiritual act is one which brings us into communion with God, not one which transports us out of correspondence with the things of time and space. Indeed, in most cases, the spiritual act is richer and more complete when it finds expression in some external symbolic action. I am not prepared with any theory as to why this is so: I only state it as a fact, which few will deny, that the instinct which draws people to seek a symbolic expression for their deepest feelings is very general, and is natural and wholesome. There is nothing manly in repressing the natural expression of right emotion. The highly gifted nature is that of the man who both feels strongly and can express his feelings in many ways; he is a man of many symbols. Poetry largely consists in vividly pourtraying an idea by clothing it in another form; metaphors are linguistic sacraments. We may explain the fact how we will: there may be—I believe there is—a real hidden harmony in things, which, when we catch it, helps us to understand them better than when we view them "in disconnexion, dull and spiritless"; but if others will have it that the connexion is merely subjective, I do not complain. It is enough for my present argument that it is natural to seek and find symbols, and as natural for the man as for the child.

"But do the symbols *convey* the grace which they express?" I do not think that we can get much further than the definition given in our Church Catechism, that a sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," or that of one of the schoolmen: "Sacramentum est signum significans efficaciter effectum Dei gratuitum." We must remember that in so far as the celebration of a sacrament is intended to produce a *change*,

it must be a change in ourselves and not in external nature, nor in God. God is already reconciled to us in Christ; it is quite unnecessary for us either to offer any new expiatory sacrifice to Him, or to "plead" any old one, as if He were in danger of forgetting His covenant. The change to be produced is in ourselves only. And it is needless to say that we cannot cleanse our souls by washing our bodies (cf. 1 Peter iii. 21), nor assimilate the merits of Christ by eating His flesh. In the Holy Communion, as Hooker says, it is not the elements by themselves, but the faithful participation of them, which confers grace. And faithful participation includes the intention on our side to perform the acts in consideration of which we accept the promised graces, and to co-operate in "working out our salvation" so far as in us lies.

On the other hand, we must hold that the Sacraments are real vehicles or instruments of grace. It is not true to say, as Calvin did, that "he who is not a Christian before baptism cannot be made one by baptism, which is only the seal of the grace of God before received." Statements like this "overthrow the nature of a sacrament" not less than transubstantiation does. The Christian, when he receives Baptism or Holy Communion, pledges himself to make his life a living sacrifice to God; he transacts the forms, ordained as he believes by Christ Himself, by which that pledge is ratified on his part, and by which the promised grace is confirmed to him by God. The Sacraments are not magical formulæ which the spirits must obey; but they are "means by which we receive" real and great spiritual benefits. If we probe the difficulty to the bottom, we find that it is really part of a mystery which environs us in all the circumstances of our life, and which is by no means peculiar to acts of worship. We do not know, and we cannot know, how there can be any causal connexion between acts performed in space and time and the con-

dition of an immortal being. It is quite as difficult to understand how the marriage of a man and woman can be the cause of the existence of an undying spirit as how the reception of Baptism and Holy Communion can be the cause of the "new life" in its beginning and continuance. The idea is so difficult that I think the question of causation had better be set aside altogether in both cases; indeed, I would go further, and say that it had better be set aside in speaking of the redemption of mankind by the death and resurrection of Christ. These are eternal acts, even as the generation of the Son of God is an eternal act. They belong to the unchangeable and ever-operating counsels of God. So it is possible for the New Testament writers to say that the Lamb was slain for us from the foundation of the world, and that the Rock which followed the Israelites through the wilderness was Christ. The Passion of Christ was itself (as the Greek Fathers called it) a sacrament or mystery of an eternal truth; it was the supreme sacrament of human history; the outward and visible sign of a great supra-temporal fact. In the Holy Communion this temporal act of Christ is not repeated or supplemented—to hold this would be to imply that the sacrifice upon the cross was incomplete —but the eternal act is symbolically represented by means of a "spiritual sacrifice." In this spiritual sacrifice the members of Christ share, not only as assistants, but as priests and victims both. The perfect sacrifice is, as I have said, that wherein God, priest, victim, and beneficiaries are all one; and it is this perfect sacrifice, consummated on Calvary, and continually present to the mind of God, that we symbolically commemorate and represent. If this view be condemned as fantastic and extravagant mysticism, I can only reply that the idea of the mystical body of Christ lies at the very heart of Christianity as conceived by St. Paul and St. John; and that the dog-

matic and sacramental system of the Church was developed by men to whom the Logos philosophy and the speculative mysticism connected with it were counsels of truth and wisdom. I am not prepared to say that the Sacraments of the Church are capable of conveying any very deep meaning to those whose conceptions of personality are so rigid as to make the mysticism of St. Paul and St. John repugnant or unmeaning to them. Those who wish to banish "Greek philosophy" (by which they mean chiefly the Logos doctrine) from Christianity must defend the retention of the Sacraments, if they wish to retain them, by other arguments. For myself, I believe that Gregory of Nyssa was right when he said that "Christianity has its strength in the mystic symbols."

I consider, then, that the intellectual objections to the doctrine of sacramental grace, though they undoubtedly raise problems which cannot be solved, offer no *fresh* difficulties, which we do not have to encounter everywhere. We are left with a mystery, but it is the great mystery of human life, which surrounds all our actions, and limits all our speculations. To use a favourite figure of the mediæval theologians, our souls have two eyes, with one of which we look upon time, with the other upon eternity; and we cannot focus them together. "Christ alone could see with them both at once," says the author of the *Theologia Germanica* in a rather striking sentence. And I cannot admit that the philosophy of the Greek Church has been discredited by the degraded superstitions which have appeared in connexion with it. The deplorable descent from Plotinus to Iamblichus—from mystical idealism to theurgy and magic—is no doubt one of the typical developments of Platonism or speculative mysticism, and we need not search long for parallels in the history of Christian thought; but I am sure that there is a philosophy of religion which finds room for and even demands a high

sacramental doctrine, and of which no one need be ashamed to own himself an adherent.

But the doctrine of sacramental grace implies that certain spiritual advantages are conferred through *special channels.* It is objected that this is not just, inasmuch as all have not the opportunity of using them. Is it consistent with the justice and mercy of God that those who lived before the Christian dispensation, or the heathen of more modern times who have never heard the name of Christ, or unbaptised infants, or perhaps even schismatics who worship with the sect to which their families and friends belong, should suffer in their eternal interests by a deprivation which is either inevitable or accidental? This is an objection which ought to be most carefully weighed. The attempts which have been made by religious bodies at various times to make God the author and upholder of unjust privilege have probably produced a greater number of hideous crimes, and more undeserved suffering, than any other human errors whatsoever. It is this assumption which has been used to justify persecution; it has consigned pious and innocent Christians to the flames under the very shadow of the cross, and amid the strains of the *Te Deum.* Are we to answer that the equitable maxim, "Factum alterius alii nocere non debet," is not the law of human life, and therefore presumably not the law of God? It is, of course, true that persons are continually injured, spiritually, by circumstances quite outside their own control. All Christian effort rests on the assumption that souls may be lost for want of help. It is the knowledge that terrible and irreparable injustice may be the result of neglect, that has kindled the zeal of the missionary and the social reformer. But though this is a problem and a mystery, it is very different from such a monstrous injustice as the damnation of all unbaptised persons would be. Inequality of opportunity

is, so far as we can see, inevitable with an imperfect social organisation; but to send an innocent babe to hell because its parents could not or did not bring it to be baptised, would be an arbitrary atrocity, worthy only of a demon. Our consciences demand something more than St. Bernard's "I cannot despair" about unbaptised children. We must assert with all confidence that there can be no arbitrary and immoral sentences at God's assize. Further than this we can hardly go. The ultimate verdicts on heathen and others are no business of ours. We may say as much as we will on the folly and presumption of separation from the visible Church, but the power of binding and loosing, which Christ is said to have given to His apostles, must certainly not be construed as conferring upon the hierarchy of the Church the right of declaring the damnation of those who are outside their own body. The question whether this or that class of persons is or is not outside the "covenant of grace" is better left unasked. We cannot tell, and we are forbidden to pass such judgments. And I do not think that theories about Catholicity should be used to condemn unheard all reform movements that are non-episcopalian. Our Articles aver that "Churches have erred," and it seems conceivable that the rulers of some particular branch of the Church might make reformation from within impossible, and actually compel the reformers to secede without giving them the opportunity of preserving continuity with the past in their organisation. It is, if we may use such language, a favourite trick of the devil to capture the organisations which were meant to defeat him, and to turn them against the cause of moral and religious reform. By so doing he gets the extremely powerful forces of religious conservatism on his side, and is able to achieve such startling successes as the crucifixion of Christ by the accredited hierarchy of Jehovah. There is no more salutary exercise

for churchmen than to test their Catholicism by the situation in 29 A.D., considering candidly whether their principles would or would not have landed them on the side of Caiaphas. We must never forget that the Jewish Church based itself on much the same sanctions as the Catholic Church of our day, and that the chief priests could make out a very good case for themselves. Like all great human tragedies, the death of Christ was the result of a conflict not between good and evil, but between the good and the better. It is no libel on our modern Catholics to suspect that many of them would have failed to see that the Jewish Church had played its part, and would have echoed the high priest's fatal words with their maxim, "Melius est ut unus pereat quam unitas." And if we could imagine a Church which for centuries had bolstered itself up with forged documents, sham miracles, persistent obscurantism and misrepresentation, and persecution whenever possible, it would, I suppose, be impossible to say off-hand that a body of seceders from that Church would not carry with them into their new society the blessings that are promised to a true branch of the Catholic Church, even if they failed to secure "Apostolical Succession" for their ministers. And although no such charges can with any fairness be brought against that branch of the Church to which we belong as a justification for the secessions from her, we must remember that, according to our formularies, schism is a question of *degree*, and that in the eyes of a righteous God the *spirit* of dissidence must cut men off from the "one communion and fellowship" far more completely than any formal irregularities, however much we may deplore them.

The question may be further considered in special relation to the position of the clergy in our Church. In what sense is the prerogative of administering the Sacra-

ments a *priestly* office? I have already noticed the avoidance of the word "priest," as the title of an office, in the New Testament. In Hebrews v. 1 there is a careful definition of a high priest's functions, which is also significant. It there appears that his chief office is "to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins." Now this is certainly no part of a Christian priest's duties. The sacrifice of Christ abrogated such gifts and sacrifices for ever. The pagan-Jewish idea of a priest is one who "essentially acts on behalf of another."[1] But this is exactly the idea of mediation which Jesus Christ came to destroy. The Christian priest has no *essential* "character," which places him in a nearer relation to God than other men. The stories of Korah and Uzzah have, as I have said, no bearing whatever on the status of the laity in the Christian Church. No Christian has a right to say in virtue of his office, "Stand apart; I am holier than thou." The change has taken place, not in the status of the priesthood, but in that of the laity. The Christian λαὸς—the holy nation—needs no mediation, for Christ has made the whole Church a "royal priesthood." The Christian priest is the representative of the priestly congregation. He has received a divine commission, it is true, but the commission is, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"—a gift which is quite apart from priestly ideas. The great dignity of the priestly calling, under Christianity, is that it constitutes us "ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as if God were entreating you by us," *i.e.* it is as prophets, rather than as priests, that the clergy should magnify their office. By the same Holy

[1] The definition is given and accepted as applying to the Christian ministry by Canon Scott Holland (SANDAY'S *Sacrifice and Priesthood*, p. 154). It may be compared with a characteristic sentence of Jerome, "If a monk falls, a priest shall pray for him; but who shall pray for a priest who has fallen?" The definition quoted in the text is capable of an inoffensive explanation, viz. that the priest, *qua* priest, acts as the representative of the people; but the word "essentially" is suspicious. We want an explicit repudiation of the doctrine which is clearly implied in Jerome's words.

Spirit, who is imparted to the clergy on their ordination, "we *all* have access to the Father"; as members of one body, "we are *all* made to drink into one Spirit." Attempts have recently been made to use this figure of the body and its members, which, to St. Paul's mind, expressed the extreme closeness and *immediacy* of our relations with our Divine Head, in defence of a modified sacerdotal theory. The priesthood, it is said, are the "organs" by which the Church communicates with its Head. Differentiation of function is the characteristic of all highly organised life. The various organs are adapted to their several functions, and if they interfere with each other, the result is disease. This is a very specious analogy, and one which requires to be carefully considered. The organic unity of the Christian body—the Church—is a fact of the highest significance. It has been the great glory of the Catholic movement in our Church that it has realised the immense power for good which the consciousness of a corporate life may exercise, and has shown in the most practical and convincing manner that great stores of devotion and enthusiasm were lying unused, and only waiting for the true idea of the Church to be once more proclaimed. We may also readily admit that in all matters of *discipline* the analogy of the bodily organism is thoroughly sound. The Church needs a hierarchy of officers, not to exact an unquestioning obedience, as in an army or as in the Roman Catholic Church, but with sufficient authority to secure order and efficiency. This principle demands that no religious ceremonies—least of all, the great Sacraments—shall be administered by unauthorised persons. We may go further, and say that any such infringement of Church order and discipline must be highly displeasing to God; but as applied to the relations of priests and laymen, this figure of the body and its members may be exceedingly

dangerous and misleading. It is true that in the bodily organism the brain is connected with the limbs by the nervous system, which may, in a sense, be said to mediate between the brain and the muscles. But Jesus Christ is not the brain of His mystical body—He is its *life:* and there can be no mediation between the body and its life. We are all in direct relation to Him; we not only need not, we cannot, approach Him through any human mediator. In Holy Communion, the priest, as representing the congregation, exercises prerogatives which strictly belong to the Church as a whole. The congregation are not spectators, but participants in the office. If this is so, it is clear that the metaphor of the body and members must be used with the utmost caution in speaking of the relations of clergy and laity.

The notion of priesthood can hardly be dissociated from the kindred notion of *sacrifice*, which has generally been regarded as the priestly function *par excellence.* If we could accept the definition of sacrifice given by a recent advocate of a mild and apologetic sacerdotalism, as "love acting in a sinful world," there could be no objection to calling the Eucharist and a great many other things sacrifices. The word has, happily, come to be used in a thoroughly Christian sense; but it has also other and less worthy associations, which need not be emphasised again, since they have been discussed earlier in this paper. Hooker and Lightfoot have both had the courage to express regret that the two words Priest and Sacrifice have established themselves in our Church, not because they have not acquired a sense in which they can be safely used, but because they are closely associated with errors into which religion is always very prone to fall, and which it was a main object of the Christian revelation to banish for ever. It would, however, be quite impossible to get rid of the words now. Our task must be to fix their best

interpretation, and steadily to discountenance all attempts to drag them back to the weak and beggarly elements out of which Christ lifted them. For us the Holy Communion is a sacrifice—that of ourselves, our souls and bodies, which we thereby consecrate to the service of God; it is a commemoration of a sacrifice—that of Christ upon the cross; it is also the representation of a sacrifice—that of the Son of God regarded as an eternal act. With reference to this last, we may say, if we like, using popular language, that we are doing on earth what Christ is doing in heaven; we are certainly right to insist that the sacrifice on Calvary has its eternal, and therefore ever-active, side; but we must remember that it is the eternal act that we are symbolically representing, not the temporal act that we are repeating or continuing when we celebrate the Eucharist. If we will remember this, we may safely make the service as solemn and magnificent as we can.

The last point on which I wish to dwell is that of the "Real Presence" of Christ in the Holy Communion. I have already said that the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation rests entirely on an obsolete metaphysical distinction between substance and accidents, and that even if it were true, no spiritual benefit could accrue to us from "pressing with our teeth" the body of Christ. The doctrine of transubstantiation is really a "myth" in the Platonic sense, and if it is so understood, we may admit that it may be to some a valuable stimulus to feelings which we all desire to make as acute as possible at the moments when we are communicating. And yet we are not speaking mythically when we say that Christ is "really" present in the sacrament. Certainly the elements must be regarded as the Body and Blood of Christ *only* as "taken and received by the faithful" communicant; and therefore I do not think that the anxious and almost

ostentatious reverence which we often see paid to the unconsumed remnants is wise or wholesome, though it may plead the sanction of ancient usage. But this restriction is really a gain; for the Roman Catholic doctrine, by confining the divine presence within the elements, causes the other constituent parts of the sacrament to lose in sacredness, so that the celebrant does not even feel that the service is fatally mutilated by the absence of a congregation. To us the presence of Christ is not any the less real because it is not so rigidly localised. The real is not that which occupies a limited area of space, but that which is present to the healthy consciousness of a personal being. Strictly speaking, God alone possesses complete personality, and that alone is real which is present to His mind. But human beings have not only received life and personality from Him as a gift; we are sharers in His life, inasmuch as Christ, or the Holy Spirit, who is the Interpreter of Christ (I do not think we need dispute as to which is the more accurate expression) dwells in us. In so far as we have the mind of Christ, we not only see things as they really are, but they really are because we see them. I wish to commend this statement to the consideration of those who may be disposed to complain that I have advocated a "purely subjective" theory of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. I ask them to consider whether their objection has any meaning at all except on the assumption that sensible objects have a real and independent existence, whether they are perceived by us or not. This assumption, which philosophers call naïve realism, is of course the opinion of the "man in the street," but the Creeds and Sacraments were not built upon this basis, nor can they be understood or intelligently accepted on this hypothesis. The presence of Christ in the Eucharist, then, is real because, when we partake of it, the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit

that Christ is present with us. And it is His will that we should realise His presence most vividly by means of those symbols which He has appointed for us and ordered us to use. Like all symbols, they are attached on the one side to the real and eternal verities, and on the other to the perishing world of appearance. It is nonsense to ask whether the elements in and by themselves are the Body and Blood of Christ, because in and by themselves they are nothing at all. They are *efficacia signa*, and their efficaciousness is a matter of experience. We do, as a matter of fact, attain by them to a deeper consciousness of our union with Christ than by any other means. And they have this effect upon us, I think, in proportion as we treat them as symbols of a spiritual reality, neither rationalising the Sacrament into a mere commemorative meal, nor materialising its symbolic value into the "substance" of Christ's Body. Both these opposite errors destroy the nature of a sacrament by ignoring its symbolic character. The value of sacramental symbolism is that it provides us with a *language* less inadequate than any other mode of representation, by which earth and heaven are brought together and made to interpret each other. In the Holy Communion we are led as near to the solution of the great mystery of life as we can go without passing within the veil. The outward and inward, which are so mysteriously associated in all our experience, are here by faith resolved into the higher unity which we believe in but cannot grasp. We have tried again and again, it may be, either to unify or to dissociate them; and have found that we can do neither without falling into contradictions. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we find, not a solution of the problem, but a symbol of the solution. If it were fully intelligible, it would not be a true symbol of what is beyond our intelligence. When we see God face to face we shall no longer need even the highest symbols. But here on earth

we do need them. We need them not only to give an outward expression to our highest and deepest feelings, but to hallow and consecrate by association our most commonplace actions. All life should be felt by us to be sacramental. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. "True religion," as John Smith, the Platonist, wrote in the seventeenth century, "never finds itself out of the infinite sphere of the Divinity. A good man finds every place he treads upon holy ground. To him the world is God's temple; he is ready to say with Jacob, How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven." But how much easier is it to have these feelings if such common substances as water, bread, and wine, possess for us a peculiar sacredness as the vehicles of sacramental grace! The prayer of consecration, as Clement[1] suggests, should make every meal an Eucharist; the laver of regeneration may give a kind of dignity even to our common ablutions. The more closely we can associate the thought of the presence of God with these common actions, the better it will be for us. We cannot be wrong in seeing God everywhere, and finding symbols of His love to man in all that we see and do; and I believe that this happy consciousness of His presence is greatly stimulated by the belief that He gives Himself to us, in a pre-eminent degree, in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

It must never be forgotten that it is only as members of a brotherhood that we can claim to receive these privileges. The beautiful maxim, *vides fratrem, vides Dominum tuum*, may be inverted; when we see our Lord, we see our

[1] (*Paed.* ii. i. 10). "He that eateth eateth unto the Lord and keepeth Eucharist to God. The religious meal is an Eucharist."

brethren. Our Church forbids the Eucharist to be celebrated where less than three or four are gathered together, and a solitary communion is rightly felt to be impossible. There is a deep mystery about our relation to our fellow-men, to whom we are bound by closer ties than can be explained on the hypothesis that we are independent, mutually exclusive individuals; this solidarity of humanity in Christ is symbolised in the Eucharist. I suppose that we should understand this mystery if we loved God and our neighbour as He loves us both; but the rule is universal that purification must have her perfect work before the illumination is granted to us which leads up to the fruition of the *unio mystica.*

In conclusion, I must repeat what I said at the beginning of this essay, that the true sacramental doctrine for everyone is the highest and most spiritual that he is able to realise vividly and take into his religion. It is foolish to expect close agreement, and very useless to wrangle about it. Those who have no warm religious feelings had better keep silence; of all unprofitable tempers in which to approach the subject that of cold rationalism is the worst. And next to it in badness is the spirit of blatant partisanship, which adopts a set of catch-words as controversial weapons, and never tries to understand either its own tenets or those of its opponents. Gross superstition, which is another common fault, may be the effect either of a decay of faith, which has left the symbol high and dry, so to speak, a lifeless lump which has no place in heaven or earth; or it may be merely the consequence of crass scientific and philosophic ignorance. The latter is not a religious error, and it is seldom worth while to make a frontal attack upon it; but the more mischievous kind of religious materialism can only be cured by deepening the spiritual life, and so revivifying the symbol. We may all

expect and hope that, as we advance in faith and knowledge of God, the outward visible sign will become a more and more transparent medium of the inward spiritual grace. There are no sacraments in heaven; but it is only when that which is perfect is come that that which is in part shall be done away.

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